FOCUS ON THE COPTIC FAMILY

A Scriptural and Liturgical Guide
Based on
the Coptic Orthodox Lectionary
(Katamaros)



by Fr. Mikhail E. Mikhail, D.Min

COPTIC ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
St Mark Coptic Orthodox Church
Cleveland, Ohio

Focus On
THE COPTIC FAMILY

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Cover Photograph:

The Icon of our Lord Jesus Christ which miraculously seeped heavenly oil

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Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ King of Kings and Lord of lords

Icon designed by Dr. Youssef Nassief and Dr. Bedour Latif



H.H. Pope Shenouda III, 117th Pope of Alexandria and the See of St. Mark



**The Author with H.H.
Pope Shenouda III
in his historical visit
in America, 1989**

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FOREWORD

Although some books and studies have addressed the subject of the enhancement of the devotional life of the Copts living in the land of immigrants, none have approached this issue by making such extensive use of the Coptic Orthodox Lectionary (Katamaros).

The importance of the spiritual growth of the family unit cannot be stressed enough.

This can be clearly illustrated in the wonderful verse from the Bible: "I and my family worship the Lord" (Josh 24:15). Without having the Lord constitute a major part of the family unit, this family unit has a serious defect. There is no better way to encourage spiritual training and growth than by reading the Bible, daily and applying its principles to use.

The Coptic Orthodox Church, is indeed, a biblical church, which relies on the Holy Bible, as the first source of teaching.

The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary (Katamaros), containing readings for Sundays, the Weekdays, the Great Lent, Holy week, and the Pentecost Lectionary, is a comprehensive and thorough study of the various stages of our Lord's life on earth: the Annunciation, His birth, His baptism, His ministry, His suffering on the cross, His resurrection, His ascension and His Second Coming.

By reference to the Saints and their Holy lives, we ensure a continuation of the Apostolic tradition.

The objective of this book is to provide an effective and concrete guide in the utilization of the Lectionary. It provides spiritual direction, offering a course of daily readings for each member of the family to follow.

The book can be divided into five segments. The first segment includes the readings of the Sundays throughout the year which deal with the work of the Holy Trinity: The love of God the Father, the grace of the Son Jesus Christ, and the fellowship and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The second segment is a study of the lectionary for the remainder of the weekdays, which is based on the lives of the Saints.

In the third segment, which deals with the Lenten season, the Lectionary sheds light on the relationship between the prophecies read in the Old Testament and their fulfilment in the New Testament.

The fourth segment, an analysis of the lectionary for "Passion Week", is a close follow-up of our Lord's suffering day by day and hour by hour.

Finally, the fifth segment is meant to be read for the Period of Pentecost where the lectionary portrays the Lord Jesus Christ as being indeed the Conqueror whose love is everlasting. It also brings out the blessings, and fruits of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I sincerely hope that this book will be a source of inspiration to you and that through the use of the

lectionary, your faith will be strengthened your spiritual life increased and your ability to achieve unity of spirit and mind in your family enhanced.

May God be with you through the prayers and intercession of the Mother of God St. Mary, St. Mark the Evangelist, and His Holiness Pope Shenouda III.

Glory Be to God forever. Amen.

Fr. Mikhail E. Mikhail, D.Min.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A. The Christian Family[1]

The first family on earth was not formed of two persons, a man and a woman (Adam and Eve) but it rather consisted of three, God, Adam and Eve.

Any newly formed family consists initially of three members: God, and the two spouses. That is why, when a family begets a child he is the child of the two parents, and also the child of God, by baptism, thus belonging to the church.

Marriage that does not have God as a member is not a holy family.

God makes the two spouses into one when they receive the sacrament of marriage through the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Bible text reads: *"Whom God joins, man cannot separate"* [Mt. 19:61]

The children that are the fruit of a marriage are called by the Holy Spirit: *"The inheritance from the Lord"*.

Marriage in our church is carried out inside the church the house of God - by the priest. Every spouse feels that he or

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1. CF. H.H. Pope Shenouda III, El-Osra El-Masihya wa El-Kerat ElKanasia, Mary, Church and Monastery 1982, pp. 3-1 1.

she has received the other as a gift from the hands of God who blessed and sanctified their marriage.

The Bible and the church history offer us many instances of good families living with God, according to His words. How wonderful is this biblical verse *"I and my family worship the Lord"* [Joshua 24:15].

We want our Christian homes to be a source of spiritual inspiration to our children where they receive the first lessons about loving God, and living the true Christian life. Parents should set a good example for their children to follow, in every good deed, and in living a righteous life. We want our families to conduct Bible studies in our homes, “a Servant and a Priest offer this handbook, therefore, to develop the devotional life of the Coptic family living as immigrants in this land through the utilization of the Lectionary (The Katamaros) of the Coptic Orthodox Church".

B. The Lectionary

The Holy Bible is our source of knowledge about the will of God; it illustrates to us God's plan for the salvation of man. The Holy Bible is the Word of God that announces to us the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, His death, resurrection, ascension, and His second- coming.

It is therefore appropriate to say that the Holy Bible is the primary source in Christian education, and consequently our Church makes it of utmost importance to educate its

members in the contents of the Holy Book, and to interpret such contents to enable them to lead their lives accordingly.

Moreover, our glorious Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has established a method of teaching the Holy Bible to its members by means of which a thorough and complete study is covered. The study comprises chapters from various sections of the Bible, mainly covering the various aspects and stages of our Lord's life on earth: the annunciation, birth, baptism, abstinence, His suffering on the Cross, the resurrection, ascension, and His second coming. The Chruch also mentions its saints on their holy days to remind the people of their model lives.

The Church presents this method of study through its text readings in the Divine Liturgy to ensure the unity of mind and spirit among its members. Such a system is followed year after year not only to guarantee a thorough comprehension of its teachings by its members, but also to ensure the continuation of the Apostolic tradition without interruption.

The Basis of this System:

The Church selects out chapters from the Gospels, Acts, the Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles, Psalms and parts of the Old Testament (read only during the holy days of Jonah, Lent and the Holy Week). These readings recited in the Divine Liturgy are contained in a book called "The Lectionary", a Greek word literally meaning "a section for every day." It is an ecclesiastical book, which contains

sections from the Holy Bible, divided and assigned to each day of the year.

Sections of the Lectionary:

1. For Sundays: present to us Jesus Christ in various aspects of His life, work, teachings and miracles.

2. For weekdays: present to us the Holy Saints of the Church and its martyrs. Such sections are divided into groups, each of which has its own special readings.

3. The Great Lent.

4. The Holy Week.

5. Pentecost.

Truly, the Holy Bible presents to us a unique method to learn about the life of Christ without contradiction, making us able to live wholly.

MESSAGES READ IN THE SUNDAYS LECTIONARY

There are forty Sundays in the Sundays Lectionary (the remaining Sundays of the year are included in the Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pentecost Lectionary). These Sundays are distributed as follows:

1. Four Sundays in each month of the following: Thuout, Paopi, Athor, Khoiak, Tobi, Mekher, Paoni, Epep, Mesori; these are 36 Sundays.

2. The two last Sundays of the month Pakhons.

3. One Sundays of the Month Nasie.

4. The fifth Sunday of any month all through the year the first and second Sundays of Pakhons and all Sundays of Paramhat and Baramuda are included in the Great Lent, Holy Week and Pentecost Lectionary.

Sundays Rule:

All readings of those forty Sundays talk about one subject: The work of the Holy Trinity. This subject is divided into three main parts:

1. The love of God the Father to Mankind.

2. The grace of the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to His people.

3. The fellowship and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

[1] The Love of God the Father to Mankind. All selections read on the Thuout Sundays deal with this subject.

[2] The Grace of the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to His People. All the readings on the Sundays of the months from Paopi through Pakhons deal with this subject as follows:

A. The Paopi Sundays: All the four Sunday readings deal with the subject "The power of the Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, on the souls".

B. The Athor Sundays: All the four Sunday readings of this month deal with the subject "The gospel of the Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to His people".

C. The Khoiak Sundays: All the four Sunday readings of this month deal with the subject "The appearance of the Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, among His people".

D. The Tobi Sundays: All the four Sunday readings of this month deal with the subject "The salvation of the Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to the Gentiles".

E. The Mekher Sundays: All the four Sunday readings of this month deal with the subject "The spiritual food of the Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to His people".

F. The Pakhons Sundays: All the four Sunday readings of this month deal with the subject "The dominance of the Only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, over His people".

[3] The Fellowship and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. All the selections read on the Paoni Sundays deal with this subject.

Following are the readings for the remaining Sundays of the year.

[4] The Help of the Saviour to His Apostles. All the selections read on the Epep Sundays deal with this subject.

[5] The Saviour's Care for His Church. All the selections read on the Mesori Sundays deal with this subject.

[6] The Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the End of the Time. All the selections read on the Nasie Sunday deal with this subject.

It should be noted that if any of these months has five weeks, we read the fifth Sunday messages, which talk about the miracle of the five loaves and the two fish. If any feast day of Jesus Christ comes on a Sunday, we read the message of this feast day and not the Sunday message.

THE TRINITY OF LOVE[1]

God is Love:

Jesus, by His coming to the world and His death on the Cross for us revealed to us the nature of God that was not known to mankind. By this coming and giving Himself, He declared to us that God is Love. As it is clearly written in John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish but have eternal life."*

Man did not recognize that love was God's nature, until the appearance of Jesus in the flesh. *"This is how God showed His love among us; He sent His one and only Son into the world, that we might live through Him"* [1 John 4:91].

The Godly love as declared by the coming of Jesus and His death on the Cross reveals to us the secret of eternal life; for what Jesus, the Son of God, performed on earth, is an objective expression of the eternal love between Him and the Father. That is why, in His last prayer to the Father, He said, *"Father, I want those You have given Me to be with Me where I am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me before the creation of the world"* [John 17:24].

"God is love," truly means that in Him, there is a loving Person and a loved one, otherwise there would have been no

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1. H.H. Pope Shenouda III, EI-Osra El-Masihya wa El-Kerat El-Kanasia, pg.18-23.

love. The loved and the loving must be present together without a beginning even before His creation of the world because God is love before the creation. For God does not change like shifting shadows [James 1:17], and as it is written in Malachi 3:6, *"I, the Lord, do not change."* Accordingly, the love of God to mankind cannot be the beginning of the loving nature of God, because this implies that God has changed and that love was introduced to His nature with the creation of man.

But the fact and the truth are that inside God, there is the Heavenly Father who is the source and origin of the Godly love. The Father is the loving one. He is the ever compassionate, who was never created.

The Son is the loved Person, being loved infinitely by the Father. He is *"The only Son, who is at the Father's side"* [John 1:18]. And the word "side" here refers to "the side of love" because God has no material "side" like man; as there is also the "Spirit of Love," meaning the Holy Spirit who originates from the Father and rests in the Son, it is the loving Spirit of the Father to the Son, as it is the loving Spirit of the Son to the Father. As it is written in Hebrews 9:14, "The blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God." And the Holy Spirit of Love is the one who pours the love of God into our hearts, *"because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us"* [Romans 5:5].

God is Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that cannot be separated from each other, a "loving Father," a "beloved Son," and a "Spirit of Love". The current of Godly love flows without interruption between the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit, and from within this Heavenly life, the Father sent His beloved Son who became Incamate for the salvation of mankind and to bring him to the unity of Godly love; in other words, to participate into the life of the Trinity. Jesus Christ has instructed His Disciples to baptize those who believe in Him, in the Name of the Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and the Baptism in the name of the Trinity means to participate in the life of Trinity, as it is written in 1 John 1:3-4, *"And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make your joy complete!* The Baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity opens for us the world of Godly life, so we move from the state of slavery to freedom, and we become beloved children to the Father. That is how God the Father of Jesus Christ, the loving Father, became our Father by our union with His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. *"In love, He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given to us in the one He loves"* [Ephesians 1:5, 6]. Also, by the baptism, we became brothers to the First Son, Jesus Christ, and that is why Jesus was incarnate and took our shape, so we can share with Him in His inheritance. *"Now, if we are children, then we are heirs - heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory, for those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers"* [Romans 8:17-29].

Through baptism we became a temple for the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love that Jesus pours into our hearts from the Father and that is how we became Sons to the Father, brothers to Jesus and a temple for the Holy Spirit. In other

words, Jesus opens for us the door to enter into the circle of Godly love that runs into the life of the Holy Trinity.

Love in the Trinity:

God is love: True love means the giving of oneself to the other. *'This is how we know what love is; Jesus Christ laid down His life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers "* [1 John 3:16].

Therefore, the Father loves the Son; that is to say, He gives Himself totally to His Father. Also, the Holy Spirit, is the real Spirit of love, who gives Himself to glorify the Father and the Son. There are many passages in the Gospel about this love in the Trinity:

> *"The Father loves the Son and shows Him all he does"* [John 5:20].
>
> *"The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in His hands"* [John 3:35].
>
> *"All that belongs to the Father is mine"* [John 16:15]
>
> And in His last prayer to the Father, Jesus said, "*All 1 have is Yours, and all You have is mine"* [John 17:10].

Jesus declares His love for the Father on his way to the Cross, and shows that He is going to be crucified as an expression of love to the Father. *"But the World must learn that 1 love the Father and that 1 do exactly what My*

Father has commanded me. Come now, let us leave" [John 15:31]. And, also, in John's Gospel, Jesus said, '*I am the good Shepherd; 1 know My sheep and My sheep know Me -- just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father -- and 1 lay down My life only to take it up again; this command, I received from My Father"* [John 10:14-18].

The word "know" mentioned by God here is "knowledge of love" and the giving of oneself to the other. "Like the Father loves Me, I love the Father and I also love my privates, and My privates love Me." Jesus explained that his Father loves Him because He gave Himself to His sheep. Therefore, Jesus Chris the Only begotten Son of God, when He gives Himself till death for His sheep, He actually embodies in front of us, the loving nature of God and applies it to the mankind Jesus, also, clarified that it was His Father's will that He dies.

The Holy Spirit, also, is a part of the act of offering, in which the Son offers Himself to the Father as an expression of His love, as it is written, *"How much more, then, will the Blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself' unblemished to God, cleanse our conscience from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God"* [Hebrews 9:14].

In Jesus, offering Himself in flesh, for the love and obedience of the Father, it is the eternal Holy Spirit that was with Jesus Christ moving Jesus towards the Father, because it is the Spirit of love that runs between the Father and the Son, and between the Son and Father.

The fellowship of love between the Trinity and mankind. The fellowship that exists between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is the source of the fellowship between God and mankind and also the source of the fellowship that exists between us as Jesus' brothers, and members of His body, who is the Church.

Jesus Christ told His Disciples, *"As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now, remain in My love; My command is this: love each other as 1 have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends"* [John 15:9-13]. So, the love of Jesus Christ to us stems from the love of His Father to Him. Jesus also said, *"If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as 1 have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love"* [John 15:10]. Therefore, Jesus, the Son of God, remains in His Father's love, and from this fountain of love (the love of the Father to the Son, and the love of the Son to the Father) comes the strength of Jesus' command to us to remain in his love, by loving each other. That is why the Gospel teaches us that love is the sign of knowing God. *"My friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, because God is love'* [1 John 4:7, 8]. St. John also said, *"Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone, who does not love, remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him"* [1 John 3:13-15]. Hate means death and whoever really believes in Christ and loves him will reject hatred, which is the seedling from Satan. Love to others is the proof for resurrection and

eternal life. Eternal life is God's life Himself, and God's life is love.

The final goal for Christ's coming. Christ has clarified, in His last prayer, the final goal for His mission as He said:

> *"Holy Father, protect them by the power of Your name; the Name You gave Me, so that they may be one as We are one. My prayer is not for them alone. 1 pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and 1 am in You. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me. I have given them the glory that You gave Me, that they may be one as We are one; 1 in them and You in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved me. Father, 1 want those You have given Me to be with Me where 1 am, and to see My glory, the glory You have given Me because You loved Me before the creation of the world. Righteous Father, though the world does not know You, I know You, and they know that You have sent Me. 1 have made You known to them, and will continue to make You known in order that the love You have for Me, may be in them and that 1 my self be in them"* [John 17:11,20-26].

Jesus, the Son of God, converses with His Father on His way to the Cross to offer Himself in love for Hiss disciples and for His believers, "So they may be one" united by love through the Holy Spirit, in Jesus Christ. Jesus has united with us by His incarnation and by the work of the Holy

Spirit in us. And by our union with Jesus, we become united in the Father, Who is in the Son. Jesus uncovered to us the love of the Father, as He loved Him.

At the end of the prayer, we discover that the world did not know the Father. "No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." Jesus knows the Father because He is His Son and He tells His Father about the Disciples and believers. *"No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made Him know"* [John 1: 18].

The Holy Spirit pours in us love from God and the Holy Spirit attracts us to Jesus and *"no one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit"* [1 Corinthians 12:3].

The living Christ remains on the side of the Father teaching us the love of the Father as He promised, "In order that the love You have for Me may be in them and that I myself be in them."

SELECTIONS OF BIBLE READ ON SUNDAYS OF THE YEAR[1]

THOUT

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	29:4,10	7:12,13	9:01	32:4,5
Gospel	Matt.11:11-19	Luke4:38-41	Mark1:29-34	Matt.9:18-26
Matins				
Psalm	30:1,9	8:1,3	9:6,7	32:17,18
Gospel	Matt.21:23-27	Mark1:35-39	Matt.8:5-13	Matt.15:21-28
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	1Tim.1:12-19	2Tim.1:12 2:11	1Cor.2:1-16	2Cor.1:1-14
Catholic Epistle	James1:22-27	James2:5-13	1Pet.1:13-21	1John3:8-12
Acts	13:25-32	11:19-26	9:22-31	9:36-42
Psalm	30:26,19	20,1,2	17:46,49,50	27:09:00
Gospel	Luke7:28-35	Luke10:21-28	Luke19:1-10	Luke7:37-50

[1] All tables on Sundays of the year from: St. Mina Monastery, Natega Daweria Tebkan Lel Takweem El-Kabty wa el-melady (Egypt: St. Mina Monastery, 1984), pp. 1-23.

SUNDAYS OF THUOUT[1]

Love of God the Father to His People

The Liturgy Gospels read on the four Sundays of this month speak about the love of God the Father to His people as follows:

The First Sunday:[2]

The Gospel speaks about the wisdom of the Father which required the sending of John the Baptist to prepare the souls by repentance to receive the Saviour as it says, *"But wisdom is justified of all her sons*" [Luke 7:35].

The Gospel of Vespers speaks about His mercy and the Gospel of Matins speaks about His justice.

The Epistles speak about the preaching of the Word of salvation done by Jesus as the Pauline points to its meanings, the Catholic points to its importance and the Acts point to the necessity of preaching it.

1. All the introductions during the Sundays of the year are from Banoub Abdou, Kenoz El-Ne'maVol. 1,2 (Cairo, Egypt: The Charity Book Store 1951).

2. Ibid., p. 223.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But Wisdom is justified by all her children" [Luke 7:35]

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"One day someone asked Abba Silvanus, 'How have you lived, father, in order to become so wise? 'He replied, 'I have never let a thought that would bring the anger of God upon me enter my heart.'"

The First Sunday of Thuout: Luke 7:28-35

This text reveals God's wisdom in sending John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Saviour by arousing their hearts to repent.

1. The text clearly states that John the Baptist is the greatest of those that are born of women since he has been the messenger chosen by the divine power to prepare the way for Christ the Saviour in due time. To fulfil that purpose, he was inspired by the grace and filled with the Holy Spirit even while in his mother's womb. The angel of the Lord declared him to be the messenger before the Lord.

2. Although John the Baptist is the greatest among those that are born of women, yet he that is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than him this could either mean our Lord Jesus Christ, who was six months younger than John the Baptist, and, therefore, less than him in the physical sense, or any Christian person who is baptized by the water and the Spirit and who lives in constant communion with the Lord

by partaking of the Holy Body and Holy Blood in the sacrament of Holy Communion. Such a Christian would enjoy the privilege of being a son as it were by adoption (Galatians 4:5). He would also be an heir of God through Christ (Galatians 4:7).

3. "All the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God." All people, other than the Scribes and the Pharisees, when they heard John the Baptist's proclamations about Christ and His coming and His calls for them to repent, they believed and were baptized. As for the Scribes and the Pharisees, they refuted John the Baptist's teachings, which revealed God's plan to redeem all humanity in the person of Christ.

The Second Sunday[1]:

The gospel speaks about the great means by which God had sent His Son to save the people as it says, *"For 1 tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them"* [Luke 10:24].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about healing of the patients by the Saviour and the Matin Gospel speaks about His preaching of the Gospel.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarous] The Sundays, the Weekday, the Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Pentecost Lectionary (Cairo, Egypt 1974), p. 20.

The Epistles speak about one subject which is the preaching of the Gospel; the Pauline speaks about bearing its troubles, the Catholic points to non-partiality in it and the Acts speak about its success.

GOLDEN TEXT

"For 1 tell you that many prophets and Kings have desired to see what you see and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear and have not heard it" [Luke 10:24].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

“I have never gone to sleep with a grievance against anyone, and as far as 1 could 1 have never let anyone go to sleep with grievance against me" [Abba Aghathon].

The Second Sunday of Thuout: Luke 10:21-28

This text reveals the salvation for the whole humanity[1]:

1. Christ rejoices in the Holy Spirit. The seventy Disciples returned with joy saying, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name," and Jesus said to them, "Not withstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." Christ’s joy and rejoicing stems from the

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1. Yonan, pp. 115-118.

fact that He had just witnessed the beginning of the great salvation for humanity for which purpose He had come.

2. Christ also said, "I thank You, 0 Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth that you had hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babies." The wise and the prudent are those who think themselves as such and who depend on their own wisdom. This has blinded their eyes from seeing the mystery of our Lord's mission of salvation, which has not, as a result, been revealed, to them. God Almighty, has, however, revealed it to "babies" or to those who are simple enough in spirit and have no conceit regarding their wisdom and prudence. Such have been filled with the Holy Spirit and are represented in the Apostles and Disciples who believed our Lord, had faith in Him and spread the word.

3. Christ goes on praising the Father, saying, "The Father rejoices in the Son who gave up Himself to be a burning sacrifice." The Father rejoices in the Son who came for the redemption of humanity so that is, once more, can become in the image and likeness of God. The Father rejoices in the Son, the Word, whose redemption has reaped for us the harvest of the Kingdom.

4. Christ then addresses His disciples saying, "All things are delivered to me of My Father," meaning the acts of redemption and judgement. In this manner, the Son will be the door through which all the Father's gifts have to go through.

5. Christ then blesses His disciples saying, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things that you see," meaning,

witnessing the Holy Spirit and seeing things that no one else could see since they believed in Him.

6. Then he continues saying, "Many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them." By this He is referring to all the believers in the New Testament who only hear about God's promises yet believe them, get attached to them though they have not been fulfilled as yet.

The Third Sunday[1]:

The Gospel speaks about salvation won by those who accept the preaching of the Gospel as Jesus said to Zaccha, *'7his day is salvation come to this house, for so much as he also is a son of Abraham"* [Luke 19:9].

The Gospel of Vespers speaks about the healing miracles, which accompanied the Saviour’s preaching of the Gospel, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about His godly power by which He made those miracles.

'Me Epistles speak about the word of preaching and salvation; as the Pauline points to its wisdom the Catholic to its value and the Acts to its growth.

1. Banoub Abdou, p. 745.

GOLDEN TEXT

"And Jesus said to him, Today, salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham"' [Luke 19:91.

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"I know that God has given us the use of goods, but only as far as is necessary, and He has determined that the use be common. It is absurd and disgraceful for one to live magnificently and luxuriously when so many are hungry" (Clement of Alexandria).

The Third Sunday of Thuout: Luke 19:1-10 Zaccaeus[1]

The Gospel speaks about the conversion of the Publican Zaccaeus. As Jesus passed through Jericho, this rich Publican climbed a tree; to see Him better. Jesus said to him, "Make haste, and come down; for today, I must abide at your house." Jesus also wants to come to our houses, i.e. our hearts.

For Zaccaeus, to come down means to leave his observation above the tree and get back to the earth; for us,

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1. Monk of the Eastem Church The Year of Grace of the Lord, Vol. 1 (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1980), p. 94

it also means renouncing all those poor artifices by which we try to raise ourselves above other men.

Zaccaeus obeyed. He hurried down, and here we find two points: first, Zaccaeus receives Jesus joyfully and second, Jesus is not a guest with whom we have to stand on ceremony or welcome formally. We should not think about reception rooms, but, we should welcome Him joyfully and say to Him, "You are the Host and we are Your guests."

Then Zaccaeus, who has just undergone an inner change, announced to the Lord that he is going to pay four times the value of anything he might have unjustly charged for, and that he is going to give half his goods to the poor.

Those who witnessed this Gospel scene murmured that He has gone to be a guest with a sinner man, so Jesus declared that the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost.

The Fourth Sunday

The Gospel speaks about the "honor" gained by those who are saved by the preaching of the Gospel after they lost it by sin. As Jesus said to the Pharisee about the lady sinner who wetted His feet by her tears and soaked them by her hair, *"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much*" [Luke 7:47]

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the mercy of the Saviour to the sinners and the Matins' Gospel speaks about His help to them.

The Epistles speak about the word of salvation as the Pauline speaks about its consolation, the Catholic about its righteousness, and the Acts about the life it grants.

GOLDEN TEXT:

'Therefore, I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little' [Luke 7:471.

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A brother asked Abba Sisoes, “what shall I do, Abba, for I have fallen?" The old man said, 'Get up again."The brother said, 'I have got up again, but, I have fallen again.“ The old man said, 'Get up again and again, until you are taken up either in virtue or in sin; for a man presents himself to judgement in the state in which he is found.'”

The Fourth Sunday of Thuout: Luke 7:36-50

The salvation of the sinful woman. This woman met Christ in the house of Simon, the Pharisee; she was saved because of her faith.

1. One of the Pharisees asked Christ to eat with him. When He went into his house, he sat down, "and behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus was there, brought an alabaster box of ointment and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears and did wipe them with the hairs of her

head." This is a sign of the sinful woman's true repentance. She felt great love in her heart for the Saviour, so she forgot her dignity and went uninvited to a strange man's house and stood there weeping in front of everybody in penitence for all her sins. She went so far as to wash Lord's feet with her tears and wipe them with her hair, which is a woman's crown of glory [1 Cor. 11:15]. She also kissed Christ's feet and anointed His feet with ointment.

2. Simon spoke within himself, judging Christ and the sinful woman, but Jesus, Who reads the minds and hearts of all, immediately knew what Simon was thinking of, and told him, "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee," and told him the parable of the two debtors. This parable denotes the difference between one sin and another, and between the sin committed against the Lord Almighty with its magnitude and that against another human being. The Lord was trying to give Simon a message: even though Simon considered this woman's sins as great, yet they differed little from his sins in the eyes of God. The difference was that the woman demonstrated greater love towards our Lord, so He forgave her many sins. Simon, the Pharisee, on the other hand, has shown no signs of repentance or love, and did not, therefore, merit Christ's forgiveness. *"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much"* [Luke 7:47].

Then He looked at the woman and said to her, "Thy faith has saved you." That woman had previously heard Christ's teachings and had believed, and she came to Simon's house to announce her repentance. God here wanted to proclaim that the woman's faith was the tool of her salvation; faith expressed in good works as when she

poured ointment on Christ's feet, when she washed them with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. She also deserved to obtain the gift of peace from the Lord, Who told her, *"Go in peace."*[1]

1. Yonan, pp. 214-118.

PAOPI

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	66:1	66:2,3	70:3-6	118:4,5
Gospel	Matt.14:15-21	Matt.17:24-27	Mark4:35-41	Matt.14:22-36
Matins				
Psalm	62:1,2	62:3,4	56:8,9	34:21,30
Gospel	Matt.28:1-20	Mark16:2-8	Luke24:1-12	John20:1-18
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	2Cor.2:12 3:6	2Cor.4:5-15	1Cor.16:12-24	1Tim.6:3-21
Catholic Epistle	1Pet.1:22 2:5	James3:13 4:6	James4:7-17	James4:17 5:11
Acts	13:36-43	14:24 - 15:3	15:4-12	15:36 – 16:5
Psalm	23:1,2	65:1,2	70:6,7	78:14
Gospel	Mark2:1-12	Luke5:1-11	Matt.12:22-28	Luke7:11-17

SUNDAYS OF PAOPI

The Power of the Saviour on His People's Souls

The Gospels of the four Sundays of Paopi revolve about one subject: the power of the Saviour on His peoples' souls.

First Sunday:

The Gospel speaks about the purification of sins by Jesus; and the proof is His statement to the paralytic, *'Son, your sins are forgiven'* [Mark 2:5], and then His saying to the teachers of the Law, *"But that you may know the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home"* [Mark 2:10-11].

The Vespers Gospel speaks about filling the souls spiritually. *'And they did all eat, were filled.. and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full"* [Mt. 14:20]. The Matin Gospel is dedicated to the memory of Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles revolve around the authority of the Word's servants in the work they were delegated to accomplish. The Pauline speaks about their ability. The Catholic speaks about their holiness, and the Acts about their forgiveness of sins.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, He said to the paralytic, 7 say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go your way to your house" [Mark2:10-11].

From the Saying of the Church Fathers:

"What can sin do where there is penitence? And of what use is love where there is pride" (Abba Elias).

The First Sunday of Paopi: Mark 2:1-12

"The healing of the man with palsy" [1]:

1. St. Mark presents to us Christ the powerful whom upon His entrance into the house, a great crowd gathered around Him to the extent of blocking the entrance to the door. It was all in order to hear the Saviour preach to them.

2. Those who brought the palsied man to Christ to heal had faith and he was therefore healed. Some believe that the sick man himself had faith which he expressed in his acceptance to be carried and let down in his bed through the roof and the crowd broke for that purpose. St.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate The Sundays, the Weekdays, Thee Great Lent, The Holy Week and the Pentecost Lectionary (Cairo, Egypt 1974).

John Chrysostom had praised these men saying, "They have put the sick man in front of Christ without uttering a word, leaving everything in His hand."

3. The Scribes should have been delighted to see the palsied man healed and his sins forgiven, but, instead they considered Jesus' word blasphemous and an escape from healing the sick man's body, saying, "Why do you thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?" Despite this, Jesus did not take an aggressive attitude towards them, but instead, He, with his eternal love, tried to heal their souls, too, along with that of the sick man. He, therefore, made two things clear to them:

(a) that he could read their minds when he said: "Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" [2:8].

(b) that they should correct their understanding of matters since they thought that physical healing was more difficult than spiritual healing.

Christ therefore sheds light on the fact that He heals the body, which all can see with their human eyes, so that they can be sure that the soul can, too, be healed and that their sins can be forgiven--a more difficult matter [2: 10-1 1].

4. If Christ ordered the palsied man to rise and take up his bed, it was to universally proclaim the miracle and make it a tangible truth. It was to proclaim that if God forgives our sins, it is only so that we can rise with Him and live with the power of His Resurrection to fulfil His commandments and His will by positive action.

In verse 12, St. Mark the Evangelist says, "And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all, inasmuch that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying. 'We never saw it in this fashion."

The healing of the palsied man was a blessing to him since his sins were forgiven and his body became whole again. It was a way in which God proclaimed Himself to the Pharisees as the Messiah and also to the crowds who were amazed saying, "We never saw it in this fashion."

Second Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about attracting the souls by the power of Jesus' word from the sea of sins, like the catching of fish at His command, and the proof is Peter's answer to Jesus, *"But because You say so, 1 will let the nets down"* [Luke 5:5]; and *"when had done so, @ caught such a large number of fish their nets began to break"* @e 5:61.

The Vespers' Gospel is about Guidance of Souls. The Matin Gospel is again dedicated to the memory of Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the "Word's Servants": the Pauline about their efforts. The Catholic about their decency, and the Acts about the joy of the believers with these servants.

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 105.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their net was breaking" [Luke 5:6].

From the Saying of the Church Fathers:

"Our Father Anthony said that he had never put his own personal advantage before the good of a brother" (Abba John the Eunuch).

The Second Sunday of Paopi: [Luke5: 1-11]

"The Miraculous Draught of Fish" [1]

This Gospel draws our attention to several points:

1. Calling of the Apostles: Jesus chose those three men, Peter, James and John, in the very midst of their work at the moment when this work was particularly fruitful to make them leave everything and follow Him.

2. Jesus had involved Himself closely in the work of the three fishermen. He had guided their actions and before calling them wanted to enter at depth into their daily and professional life. In the same way, Jesus acts with all the men he had called.

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1. Monk of the Eastem Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord,Vol 1, (Crestwood, New York: Vladimir Seminar 1980), p. 16

3. The accomplishment of obedience founded on Faith: As Peter said: "At Thy word," he who heard a word from Jesus and took some sort of risk to obey it, would obtain results quite out of proportion to anything he could have hoped for--for Peter had neither asked for the nets to break nor for the ship to sink under the weight of fish.

4. A process of profound transformation in Peter's soul showed in the way Peter addressed Jesus; at the beginning, he called Him "Master," and at the end, he called Him "Lord." This means a great spiritual progress in Peter's life.

Third Sunday[1]

The Gospel speaks about the driving out of demons from people purified from their sins by the Saviour and attracted to Him as mentioned in the two preceding Sundays, and the proof is the healing of a demon possessed man who was blind and mute, and the saying of the Saviour to the Pharisees, "But if 1 drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" [Mt. 12:28].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about peace, which Jesus gives to us. The Matins' Gospel commemorates Jesus' Resurrection.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 1 95.

The Epistles speak about the "Word's Servants": the Pauline about the necessity to submit to them, the Catholic about resisting sin, and the Acts about their wonders.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But, if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the Kingdom of God has come upon you" [Mt. 12:28].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"If the soul keeps far away from all discourse in words, from all disorder and human disturbance, the Spirit of God will come in to her and she who was barren will be fruitful" (Abba Poemen).

The Third Sunday of Paopi: Matthew 12:22-28

1. Christ presents a man possessed by the devil, and is also blind and mute. The Lord heals him and he started to see and speak. The people were amazed and said: "Is not this the son of David?" or "Is not this the Messiah we are expecting and who should come from the line of David?" As for the Pharisees, they said: "This fellow does not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils."

2. Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself." Casting out devils by the Spirit of God was not an unfamiliar practice among the Jews, some of whom used to carry out such practices, yet were not judged by their fellow citizens.

Actually contributed the miracle to the Spirit of God Undoubtedly, such Jews will act as witnesses on the day of judgement against those who uttered accusations against Christ. They should have acknowledged the fact that Jesus Christ cast out devils by the Spirit of God, that He was the son of David whose coming they were waiting for, and the Kingdom of God was close at hand.

3. What supports the previous statements were Christ's teachings and His miracles of casting out devils were proof enough that he has bound the devil and paralysed his activities by disarming him. "How can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except they first bind the strong man?" Whosoever, then, is not with the Lord is with the devil, and whosoever does not bring the faithful to Christ is spoiling the good work by dispersing the good seeds instead of gathering them. Besides, if the antagonism between Christ and the devil has reached that point, it is absurd for anyone to think that He is allied with Satan.[1]

Fourth Sunday [2]:

The Gospel speaks about the Blessing of Life that Jesus grants to these souls that He purified, attracted to Him and drove the demons away from them. The proof is the raising of the widow's son from Nain, and His saying to him

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1. The Publishing Committee in the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchy, The Gospel of Jesus Christ According to St. Matthew (Cairo, Egypt Dar el Maaref. 1972).

2. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, P. 198.

"Young man, I say to you, get up. " The dead man sat *up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother"* [Luke 7:14, 15].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about His justice and the Matin about His Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Word of Life: the Pauline speaks about it as the treasure given to the Word Servants, the Catholic about their preservation of this word, and the Acts about its effect of converting more people into believers.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"Then He came and touched the open coffin and those who carried him stood still and He said, *"Young man, I say to you, arise'* [Luke 7:14].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Therefore, go and have pity on all, for through pity, one finds freedom of speech before God" (Abba Pambo to Abba Theodore).

The Fourth Sunday of Paopi: Luke 7:111-17

"Christ Raised Up the Widow of Nain's Son"[1]

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1. Saint Cyril Patriarch of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Saint Luke Vol 1 (Studion Publishehers, Inc., 1983), pp. 153-

St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, explained this miracle saying, For the dead man was ready to be buried and many friends were transferring him to his tomb, but, there met him the life and resurrection, for He is the destroyer of death and corruption. For, by Him, we live and move and are present. It is He who had restored the nature of man as it was originally made and freed flesh from the bonds of death.

He had mercy upon the woman as He said to her, "Weep not" and immediately, He removed away the cause of her weeping by touching the bier and uttering His Godly words to the dead, commanding him to get up and return to life. The dead man sat up and began to speak, so He gave him to his mother. May our Lord Jesus Christ also touch and speak to us, delivering us from evil works, from fleshly lusts, and unit us to the assemblies of the Saints, for He is the giver of all good, by whom and with whom to God the Father be praise and dominion with the Holy Spirit unto ages of ages, Amen.

ATHOR

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	17:15,6	12:13,14	85:2-4	85:11,9
Gospel	Mark4:10-20	Luke12:27-31	Matt.11:25-30	Matt.17:14-21
Matins				
Psalm	64:9,10	66:5,6	112:2,3	142:8
Gospel	Matt.28:1-20	Mark16:2-8	Luke24:1-12	John20:1-18
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	2Cor.9:19	Heb.6:7-15	2Thess.1:1-12	1Cor.4:1-16
Catholic Epistle	James3:1-12	Jude1:14-25	1Pet.4:3-11	2Pet.1:1-8
Acts	10:37 – 11:1	5:19-29	5:30-42	16:40 – 17:7
Psalm	64:10,11	103:16,10	85:14,15	99:2
Gospel	Luke8:4-15	Matt.13:1-9	Luke14:25-35	Mark10:17-31

SUNDAYS OF ATHOR

The Saviour’s Gospel to His People

The Four Gospels revolve around one subject: The Saviour’s Gospel to His people.

First Sunday[1]:

The Gospel speaks about the Fruit of the Gospel, i.e. about those who listen to the word and become fruitful by Patience, by fulfilling their religious duties and enduring difficulties on account of the faith, like the seeds that fell on good soil, -*But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by perceiving, produces a crop'* [Luke 8: 15].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the secret fruit of the Gospel and the Matins' about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Word's Servants: the Pauline about their material rewards which should be provided by the believers, the Catholic warns them against becoming a stumbling block to the believers by their teachings, and the Acts speaks about the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the believers, thanks to their teaching.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, The Coptk orthodox Lecdonary [Katamarous] The Sundays, the Weekday, the Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Pentecost Leedonary (Cairo. Egypt: 1974), p. 58.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" [Luke8:15].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Reading the Scriptures is a great safeguard against sin" [1] (Abba Epiphanius).

The First Sunday of Athor: Luke8:4-15

"The Parable of the Sower"[1]
It is one of the best known texts of the Gospel in which Jesus Christ explains that:

1. The sowing represents the Word of God.

2. The sower (God Himself or His Son) casts the seed.

3. The seed falling by the side of the road and trodden upon by the passers by and eaten by the bird are those who receive the Word, but the devil comes and picks it up from their hearts.

4. The seed falling on the rock are those who rapidly trust, but they give up when exposed to temptation.

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1. Monk of the Eastem Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord, Vol. 1 (Crestwood, New York: Vladimir Seminary Press, 1980), p. 23.

5. The seed failing among thorns are those who believe**,** but the cares of the world, the riches and pleasures suffocate the Word.

6. The seed falling on good ground are those who receive the Word with **a** sincere heart and cling to it with patience.

The causes of bearing no fruits in the first three cases show us the conditions necessary for the spiritual life; we should not stand by the roadside but we should keep some silence and contemplation to protect the divinely sown Word. Our hearts should be regularly watered by regular prayers and other sources of grace[1]

Second Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the blessings of the Gospel, and the proof to that is what the Saviour has said, *"Still other seeds fell on good soil, where they produced a crop; a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown*" [Mt. 13:8]

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about God's care of those who apply His Gospel and their physical reward and the Matins' Gospel is reserved to the commemoration of Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Saviour's Gospel; the Pauline about the blessings to those who obey God's commands, the Catholic about the judgement of those who

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 58.

neglect these commands, and the Acts about the necessity of preaching them despite the resistance of those who are opposing.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop; some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" [Mt. 13:8]

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Ignorance of the Scriptures is a precipice and a deep abyss" (Abba Epiphanius).

The Second Sunday of Athor: Matthew 13:1-9

"The Parable of the Sower" [1]

"A sower went forth to sow, and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up".

1. The Way: symbolizes a hard proud heart that is haughty and arrogant. This road is a ground that lies higher than the cultivated fields and is, therefore, an allure for all the flying birds or the proud devils that deter us from meeting God the Son.

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1. Fr.Tadros Malaty,The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Alexandria, Egypt: -St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, 1983), pp-294-301.

The way is always open; it has no fences to keep passers by out, just like humans whose senses are attentive to all strangers and not guarded by anything.

2. The Stony Earth: *"Some fell upon stony places, where they had no much earth; and forthwith @ sprung up because they had no deepness of earth. When the sun was up, they were scorched up; and because they had no root, they withered away"* [13:5, 6]

This stony ground covered with a layer of good earth represents hypocrites, who cover up their true "hard" nature behind phoney appearances. Such hypocrites accept the word immediately as if to show good fruits so all around them would be delighted, but such hidden hypocrisy is capable of killing all life. It cannot withstand the shining sun so it burns because goodness is not deeply rooted in them. Such people wish to hide their hypocrisy, but any tribulation that befalls them uncovers their real selves.

3. The earth full of thorns: *“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them"* [13:7].

This earth represents the heart that is choked by material desires. The divine word cannot keep working on such a heart. St. Akleminus, the Alexandrine, says in this regard, "You should not blame riches, but blame their misuse. Verily, goodness does not lie in poverty but in the love of the spirit, and therefore, in the heart that is not choked by love of material riches."

4. *"But other fell into good ground and brought forth fruit, some a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, and some*

thirty-fold. Whosoever has ears to hear, let him hear" [Mtt. 13:8,9].

This is the earth that lies low, ready to be ploughed. It has been exposed to the sun and water flowing into it. This kind of earth represents the humble spirit that accepts tribulations as a plough prepares the earth for sowing, in this manner. Its inside is exposed to goodness, that is, to Christ Himself. The water that flows into it is the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that fills this soul to bring forth plenty of fruit: hundred-fold, sixty-fold, and thirty-fold.

Third Sunday[1]

The Gospel speaks about the difficulties of the Gospel's followers; that is to say the cost of being a Disciple. As Jesus said: *"And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow Me, cannot be My disciple"* [Luke 14:27].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the cross that the believers have to carry, and the Matin's Gospel is again reserved to the memory of Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles revolve around those who apply the Saviour's Gospel: the Pauline about their temporary

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 153.

difficulties which will be followed by rest; the Catholic about their attitude and behavior according to the Gospel's orders; and the Acts about their joy for their sufferings in the name of Jesus.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple" [Luke 14:27].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Go, sell all that belongs to you and give it to the poor and taking up the cross, deny yourself, in this way, you will be able to pray without distraction" (Abba Nilus).

The Third Sunday of Athor [1]: Luke 14:25-35

This text is a unique address from Christ to us as His disciples. Our Lord starts by saying, *"If any man comes to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple"* [Luke 14:26].

Christ, in this text, asserts the fact that no one, however close and dear to us, should come before Him in our lives and our hearts. Our love for Him should be such that we ought to deny our loved ones as well as ourselves, if need

1. Fr.Louis Barsoum, Homilies of the Holy Gospel Vol 1. (Egypt: The Theological Institute, 1970), pp. 118-122.

be. On the other hand, if a person does not love Christ in this manner, there is no hope for his salvation. -*"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me"* [Mt. 10:37].

This love for Christ should bear all the afflictions that it may entail. Our Lord states, *'Whosoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple"* [Luke 14:27]. There is no salvation for any soul that does not carry the cross of Christ, neither is there hope in eternal life. We should, therefore, carry our cross and follow Him for He has preceded us by carrying His cross and dying on it for our salvation. We should follow His example and die with Him so that we can live with Him. If we share His pain, we shall also share His glory. St. Paul states in 1 Corinthians 4:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God."

If the cross for us who are redeemed truly means the power of God, we should but make it the element of our pride by proclaiming with St. Paul, *"But God forbid that 1 should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified unto me, and 1 unto the world"* [Gal. 6:141.

Fourth Sunday [1] :

The Gospel speaks about the reward for those who leave everything and follow Jesus. As Jesus told Peter Simon, 'I

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 150.

tell you the truth, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the Gospel will fair to receive a hundred times as much as this present age and in the age to come, eternal life' [Mark 10:29, 30].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the ability of the believers to perform miracles by the power of the Saviour, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles deal with the Gospel's Servants: the Pauline speaks about their endurance and humility in preaching it, the Catholic about their fleeing from corruption, and the Acts about the belief of many people in their teachings.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time; houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecution, and in the age to come, eternal lie " [Mark 10:30].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Obedience responds to obedience. When someone obeys God, God obeys his request" (Abba Minus).

The Fourth Sunday of Athor: Mark 10: 17-31

"The Rich Man"[1]

1. Christ was on His way when He met the rich young man who was attached to his riches. Despite his riches, the young man felt Thirst and hungers in his heart so he ran towards Christ, and asked Him, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" This man had not yet realized that Christ was the Son of God, so Jesus rebuked him saying, "Why do you call Me 'Good?' There is no one good but one, that is God." Christ does not deny His goodness, for He called Himself "The Good Shepherd" [John 10: 11], but what He objects to is the young man calling Him "Good" since this was a general term habitually used by the Jews in addressing their religious authorities.

2. When the man asked Christ about eternal life, Christ reminds him about the commandments, saying *“You know the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honor thy father and thy mother"* [10:18, 19]. Christ wishes to remind the young man that outside the divine commandments, there is no eternal life.

3. The young man told Christ that he had observed all these commandments from his youth. Then, Jesus beholding him loved him and presented him with another commandment: *"One thing you lack, go your way, sell*

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1. Malaty, pp. 172-178.

whatsoever you have, and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me." [10:21].

Facing the challenge to carry out this commandment, the young man stood baffled for he found that the way of Christ was a difficult one. His love for his riches was such that he could not give it up for the sake of the Kingdom. St. Mark described the aftermath, saying, "And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved; for he had great possessions."

Jesus was grieved at what happened for He saw how material things, which God created for man to enjoy, have enslaved and used him. Such material things have, instead of supporting man, darkened his heart and ensnared him. No wonder Christ looked around about and said to His disciples, *"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God"* [10:27].

The disciples were astonished at His words, but Jesus answered again and said to them, *"Children, how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God"* [24, 25]. Christ proclaimed to them that the flaw is not in the riches but in the heart of the rich man who depends on his riches.

When the disciples heard Christ's words, they were astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus, looking upon them, said, *"With men, it is impossible, but not with God; for with God, all things are possible"* [26, 27]. The disciples realized the difficulty to pass the road because of all the material temptations, but

Christ clarified to them how it is with God: everything is possible.

KHOIAK

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	12:1,4	143:5,7	131:10,11	86:5
Gospel	Mark14:3-9	Luke7:36-50	Mark1:23-31	Luke8:1-3
Matins				
Psalm	101:16,17	71:5,6	84:6,7	95:1,11,12
Gospel	Mark12:41-44	Luke11:20-28	Matt.15:21-31	Mark3:28-35
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	Rom.1:1-17	Rom3:1 4:3	Rom.4:4-24	Rom.9:6-33
Catholic Epistle	James1:1-18	1John1:1 2:1	1John2:7-17	1John2:24 3:3
Acts	1:1-14	7:30-34	7:35-50	7:8-22
Psalm	101:11,14	11:13	84:9,10	79:2,3
Gospel	Luke1:1-25	Luke1:26-38	Luke1:39-56	Luke1:57-82

SUNDAYS OF KHOIAK

The Appearance of the Saviour

The Gospels of the four Sundays revolve around one topic: The Appearance of the Saviour.

First Sunday [1] :

The Gospel speaks about annunciation of the Mercy of God, i.e. annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist as the first manifestation of God's mercy on His people as evidenced by annunciation of the Angel to Zachariah, "Do *not be afraid, Zachariah; your prayer has been heard, your wife, Elizabeth, will bear a son, and you are to give him the name, John"* [Luke 1:13]. In the Hebrew language, the word "John" means, "God is merciful." The Vespers' Gospel speaks about His remembrance of the upright, and the Matins' about His answering him.

The Epistles speak about the request of the upright priest Zachariah: the Pauline about his faith that his request will be answered, the Catholic about his patience, and the Acts about his perseverance.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, The Coptic Orthodox Lictionary [Katamarous The Sundays, the Weekdays, the Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Pentecost Lectionary (Cairo Egypt: 1974), P. 9

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zachariah, for your prayer is heard, and your wife, Elizabeth, will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John" [Luke 1:13].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Having withdrawn to the solitary life, he made the same prayer again and he heard a voice saying to him "Arsenius, flee, be silent, pray always; for these are the source of sinlessness."

The First Sunday of Khoiak: Luke 1: 1-25

"Gabriel's Visit to Zacharias"[1].

1. St. Luke begins his Gospel by mentioning the birth of John the Baptist to Zacharias, the priest, and his wife, Elizabeth, who were both righteous and, according to the ordinances of the Lord blameless. They had no children, but it was not because they were with sin. The Bible mentions them, as being righteous and the Lord wanted to work through them a wondrous miracle: a fruit from a barren woman and a couple well stricken in years.

1. Mikhail, Gabriel’s Visit to Zacharias (Cleveland, Ohio: Homily in St Mark Coptic Orthodox Clurch, 1983).

2. While Zacharias was executing the priest's office before God in the order of his course, his lot was to burn incense when he went into his temple. Burning incense was carried out twice a day: once at the third hour and the other at the ninth hour (Exodus 30:78). While this was being done, the people used to wait outside praying silently so as not to disturb the priest.

3. While Zacharias was burning incense, the angel Gabriel appeared on the right side of the altar of incense and announced to him that God had heard his prayer and his wife Elizabeth would bear him a son and he would call his name John. The angel added that Zacharias and Elizabeth would not be alone in their joy and gladness, but that many would rejoice at his birth. St. Luke adds later on in the chapter, *"And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shown great mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with her"* [1:58].

4. The angel further stated that John would be great in the sight of the Lord. John's greatness was attributed to the following:

(a) he was filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother's womb

(b) his simple food and clothing and his dwelling in the wilderness for 30 years

(c) he was the messenger who prepared the way for the Lord

(d) he was the one who baptized Christ

(e) he opened the doors of repentance for all

(f) he was declared by Christ to be the greatest of all men born of women

(g) he was prosecuted and martyred for defending the truth.

5. Finally, the angel declared how John, through his work, would prepare a people for the Lord. Thus, John will perform his duty fully by preparing the way for the Lord and by laying down his life for the truth.

The Church reads this text to declare God's mercy upon His people. When the angel announced the conception and birth of John the Baptist, it was the first sign to show God's mercy towards His people

Second Sunday: [1]

The Gospel speaks about the annunciation of the birth of Jesus as the Angel Gabriel announced to St. Mary, *"You will be with a child and give birth to a son and you are to give Him the name Jesus'* [Luke 1:31].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Salvation of His people from their sins and the Matins' Gospel about giving them peace by driving out the evil spirit from them.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 237

The Epistles also speak about annunciation of the birth of Jesus the Saviour: the Pauline speaks about Mary's belief in the Angel's annunciation, the Catholic about His light, and the Acts about the conception of Jesus.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son and shall call His name Jesus" [Luke 1:3]

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A brother asked Abba Tithoes, “Which way leads to humility?” The old man said: “The way of humility is this: self-control, prayer, and thinking yourself inferior to all creatures.”

Second Sunday of Khoiak: Luke 1:26-38

"Gabriel's Visit to St. Mary" [1].

This Gospel speaks about the annunciation of the birth of Jesus Christ.

1. **The preface of the annunciation:** God had sent the angel Gabriel to St. Mary, the Virgin, who was engaged to a man from the house of David, called Joseph. This

1. Banoub Abdou, Kenoz el Ne'ma, Vol. 2 (Cairo, Egypt: El Sheraty Bookstore, 1953), pp. 89-98.

was on the sixth month of his annunciation to Zachariah, the priest, of the birth of John the Baptist.

2. **The annunciation:**

(a) The angel began his annunciation **by** the word, “Hail, you, and this was the first annunciation about the nature of the One to be born who would come to bring peace on earth, as the angels said, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward* men" [Luke 2:14].

(b) Then, the angel described St. Mary by the word, "Highly favored" and this represents the position of St. Mary in our church, above all people. This is why we put her above the heavenly and earthly beings in our church.

(c) Then he said to her, "The Lord is with you." This is the guarantee from God to her that He will be with her, and help her in all her life.

(d) "Blessed are you among women" signifies that if God and the heavenly beings honor her to be above all other women, so we should honor her in the same way.

(e) The end of the annunciation. St. Mary was afraid, so the angel said to her: *"Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God and you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus" [* 1:30, 31].

(f) Explanation of the annunciation. St. Mary asked the angel, *"How shall this be, and 1 know not a man?" The angel answered "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the highest shall overshadow you"* [1:35].

(g) Belief in the annunciation. St. Mary said: *"Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to your word"* [1:38].

Third Sunday [1] :

The Gospel speaks about His justice and mercy exemplified in Himself, in His peace and righteousness, exemplified in John the Baptist as we see in St. Mary's visit to Elizabeth and in Mary's praising of the Lord: "He has helped His servant Israel, remembering to be merciful."

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the purification of His people from evil spirits, and the Matins' Gospel about healing them from their illness.

The Epistles speak about the Saviour's justice: the Pauline about the virtue of believing in Him, the Catholic about His light, and the Acts about His dwelling place.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 1 0.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy" [Luke 1:54].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

One day, Abba Arsenius consulted an old Egyptian monk about his own thoughts. Someone noticed this and said to him, "Abba Arsenius, how is it that you, with such a good Latin and Greek education, ask this peasant about your thoughts?" He replied, "I have indeed been taught Latin and Greek, but I do not know even the Mother of this peasant (meaning the principles of monastery life).

The Third Sunday of Khoiak: Luke 1:39-56

"St. Mary's Visit to Elizabeth" [1] .

Two phrases of this Gospel explain why we raise St. Mary above all the saints:

1. Her words, "From henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed for he who is mighty has done unto me great things."

2. The words of Elizabeth to Mary, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

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1. Monk of the Eastern Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord, Vol. 1, (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1980), p. 32.

So, we shall continue to call her "blessed" and we cannot separate her from her Son because we cannot say, "blessed art thou" without saying "blessed is the fruit of thy womb."

This is why we love St. Mary, the Virgin and Mother of God, through whom we discover the nature of her Son as the Incarnate Son of God. Her life speaks about God's redeeming deed and explains man's role in attaining the heavenly life by the Divine Grace. So, we should always glorify her in our prayers as we say, "We magnify thee, O'Mother of the true light, and we glorify thee, O Virgin Saint Mother of God."

Fourth Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the prophecy of His appearance, as Zachariah prophesied about Jesus, *"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has come and redeemed His people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David"* [Luke 1:68, 69]. The actual appearance of the Savior is celebrated by the Church on the 29th of Khoiak.

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about His preaching, and the Matin's Gospel about His rewards for those who fulfil His will.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

The Epistles speak about the prophecy of the Savior's appearance: the Pauline about the promise of His birth, the Catholic about the steadiness of those who believe in Him, and the Acts about Moses as a symbol to Him.

GOLDEN TEXT

"And He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David" [Lake 1:69].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"May your heart become very brave against all idea so that you become relieved from it. As for that who fears from it, it overcomes him so he falls down and proves his unfaithfulness of God, so he cannot pray in front of Jesus from all his heart, except you drive them away" (Abba Moses the Black).

The Fourth Sunday of Khoiak: Luke 1:67-79

"Zacharias' Praise of the Lord" [1].

1. The event in which it was said: "It was on the day of John the Baptist's circumcision and Zacharias was filled with joy" to which St. Luke, in the text, attributes a great and

1. St. Mary Church & Monastery, El Osra El Masiheya wal Keraat El Kanaseya (Cairo, Egypt: El Maadi 1983), pp. 236-240.

divine purse. Zacharias. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, opened his mouth and spoke and praised God.

2. The contents of the praise: "Blessed by the Lord." Zacharias praises God who has fulfilled all His promises magnified in the miracle of giving him a son in his old age and right before the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Who will give light to them that sit in the darkness.

3. The Lord seeks His own people. Zacharias was the first to realize that God was seeking His people. His eyes, therefore, were opened to God's plan of salvation, and he started the mission that the Lord had planned for him to carry out five thousand years ago. In this text, Zacharias announces the coming of the Lord, whom no one knows yet, and starts to praise the Lord, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people."

4. He had raised up for us a horn of salvation, meaning He had raised for us a strong salvation since for the bull, the horn is the symbol of his might and power. In the New Testament, the word came to denote power.

5. The Holy oath, which God swore to our father, Abraham: God's oath to Abraham is an important link in the chain of salvation. It has immediate obvious goals as well as distant spiritual ones. The former was realized in the following events: the possession of the land of Canaan, the fruitful multiplication of the seed through which all tribes on earth were blessed, and finally, victory over the enemy.

As for the distant spiritual goals to be realized, when Abraham got ready to offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, God sent the rain to be sacrificed instead. At this moment, Abraham saw a vision in the spirit that the woman's seed shall crush the serpent's head: he saw the Saviour on the Cross crushing Satan. This is what our Lord revealed later on when He said, *"Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad"* [John 8:56]. No wonder, Zacharias prophesied about the horn of salvation raised for us in the house of David. His joy made him utter this beautiful praise.

TOBI

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	46:1,2	97:4,8	76:12,13	77:17,20
Gospel	Luke4:40-44	Matt.14:22-36	John5:1-18	John5:31-46
Matins				
Psalm	92:1,2	96:1,2	16:6,4	79:7,16
Gospel	Luke4:31-37	Mark3:7-12	John3:1-21	John6:47-58
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	Rom.15:4-19	Gal.5:2-10	Heb.10:19-39	Rom.11:13-36
Catholic Epistle	1John3:1-11	1John3:18-24	1John4:11-21	1John5:9-20
Acts	14:24 – 15:3	15:22-29	2:38-45	11:2-18
Psalm	97:2,3	83:7 – 64:2	65:11,7	35:7,8
Gospel	Matt.2:13-23	Luke11:27-36	John3:22-26	John9:1-38

SUNDAYS OF TOBI

Jesus' Salvation to the Gentiles

The Gospels of the four Sundays deal with Jesus' salvation to the Gentiles.

First Sunday:

The Gospel speaks about the declaration of salvation to the Gentiles, as written about St. Joseph, *"So he got up***,** *took the Child and His mother during the night and left for Egypt'* [Mt. 2:14], and he remained there until Herod died. Then he returned to the Galilee.

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about His healing of the patients and His preaching, and the Matin's Gospel about His authority on the evil spirits.

The Pauline epistle speaks about the Gentiles' hope on the Saviour’s Name, the Catholic about purifying them because of that hope, and the Acts about their return to faith.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"When he arose, he took the young Child and His Mother by night and departed for Egypt" [Mt. 2:14].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"It is written, 'Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves' [Mt. 10: 16]; being like serpents means not ignoring attacks and wiles of the devil. The simplicity of the dove denotes purity of action" (Abba Syncletia).

The First Sunday of Tobi: Matthew 2:13-23

'The escape to Egypt, the staying of the children in Bethlehem, the return to Nazareth"[1]

1. **The escape to Egypt:**

   (a) Christ's escape from evil confirms the fact of His incarnation. St. John Chrysostom says in this respect, "Since He performed miracles in His early childhood, He was not considered human."

   (b) As a human, His escape demonstrates to us a spiritual path to follow with a main objective of not fighting evil by evil.

   (c) Egypt was the leader of the pagan world; Jesus wanted to sanctify its land by blotting out paganism there and by establishing an altar for Him in it [Isaiah 19]. St John Chyrsostom says in this regard "Egypt and Babylon were the two lands full of evil, but God, since the beginning, proclaimed His wish to purify both lands for

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1. Tadros Malaty. The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Alexandria. Egypt: St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, 1983), pp. 60-64.

Himself, so that He can improve them and so that other lands would follow in their lead and ask for God's gifts. That is why God sent the wise men to one and He and His mother visited the other."

2. The slaying of the children of Bethlehem:

(a) It did not happen by mere chance; it actually was an indivisible part of our Saviour's life that was predicted in both the Old and the New Testaments. Jeremiah, the prophet, saw Rachel, Jacob's wife, weeping for her children who were suffering because of Herod's harshness towards them.

(b) These children have actually performed a great deed and have been martyred in front of the whole world. They represent the church in the New Testament that is characterized by the simplicity of the spirit, as those children were a church that could not be tolerated by Herod and therefore was persecuted by him. This was in vain, though, since such persecution would not stifle its strength in martyrdom. These children have died so young but have enjoyed union with the Son of God wherever he may be.

(c) Despite the weeping and lamentation this incident involves, we cannot deny it since it shows clearly that the Church of the New Testament is a simple

one free of complications, a Church that carries the cross as its essential symbol, a church of pioneers that rises up high to carry out its spiritual life and become part of the crucified body.

3. The return to Nazareth:

Christ's arrival in Nazareth, a town of no great importance was done with the aim to abolish the pride, the Jewish people had in relation to certain tribes or to certain towns of some importance.

Nazarenes, the title given to Christians, is a word derived from "Nazareth," which in Hebrew is "Natzar" meaning "branch," Our Lord was described by that term in more than one prophecy in the Old Testament [Isaiah 1: 1, 2; Jeremiah 1 1:5; Zechariah 3:8].

Second Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the blessings of salvation for those who fulfil Jesus' commands, as He said, *"Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it'* [Luke 11:28].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Saviour’s peace for those who believe in it and the Matins' Gospel about His justice with them, i.e. healing their illnesses.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Fathers, p. 20.

The Epistles speak about the same subject: the Pauline about that the blessings need deeds beside faith, the Catholic about the strength and steadiness of the believers in Christ, and the Acts explain what they should abstain from.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But He said: 'More than that, blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it" Luke 11:28].

From the Sayings of the Church Father:

"Unless he keeps the commandments of God a man cannot make progress, not even in a single virtue" (Abba Aghathon) [1].

The Second Sunday of Tobi [1]: Luke 11:27-36

1. While Jesus was talking, a woman raised her voice and said, *'How happy is the woman who bore you and nursed you,' but Jesus answered, "Rather, how happy are those who hear the word of God and obey it"* [11:27, 28]. Here, Jesus Christ transfers us from just admiring the word of God and its temporary perception to the real praise of those who hear and keep it. So what is our attitude towards healing and keeping the Godly word in our lives? And what is its effect on our interrelations?

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1. Louis Barsoum Explanation of the Holy Gospel (El Giza. Egypt: The Eastern Fransiscan Eklirikan College, 1970).

2. After Jesus had healed the dumb man who was driven by the devil, some of the people asked Him to show them a miracle from the sky to tempt Him, but Jesus refused their demand, saying, *"How evil are the people of this day, they ask for a miracle, but none will be given to them except the miracle of Jonah"* [11:29]. Here, the cause of refusal was that because they wanted to tempt Him rather than to believe in Him. What is our attitude towards the miracles of Jesus? Do we ask Him to do it because we are in need to it, or to tempt Him?

3. Jesus Christ and Jonah: "In the same way that the prophet Jonah was a sign for the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be a sign for the people of this day [11:30]. The same as Jonah remained in the belly of the whale and then came out alive, and so became a miracle to the people of Nineveh, also Jesus will die and remain in the grave for three days and then come out alive and become a miracle to the Jews and the Gentiles, conquering the death and its power [1 Cor. 15:56].

No doubt that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is the greatest miracle which proves his divinity, else the correctness of His mission and divine teachings.

4. *"No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a bowl; instead he puts it on the lamp stand, so people may see the light as they come in'* [11:33].

Jesus said to them this proverb to indicate the punishment which will be upon them in case of disbelief in Him because God has lighted His glaring lamp and has put it on a high

lighthouse so that all the people can see and believe in it, but they refused it, so Jesus refused them.

As for us, we should accept the Lord Jesus and His divine light and the higher is the straightness of the soul and its preparation to accept the teachings of Jesus Christ, the higher becomes its beauty and purity and, else, its liability to enter the Kingdom of God and the eternal life.

Third Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the life of salvation that the believers in Jesus enjoy, as John the Baptist said, “Those who believe in the Son have the eternal life." The Vespers, Gospel speaks about the healing of sins and the Matins' Gospel about their renewal by His baptism.

The Epistles speak about the same subject: the Pauline shows that the life cannot exist except with faith, the Catholic speaks about the intended faith, which is the faith acting by love, and the Acts point to the fellowship of love that should be present among the believers.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"He who believes in the Son, has everlasting life, and who does not believe in the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him" [John 3:36].

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 170.

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A man who teaches without doing what he teaches is like a spring which cleans and gives drink to everyone, but is not able to purify itself "(Abba Poemen).

The Third Sunday of Tobi: John 3:22-36

The difference between John's baptism and Christ's baptism[1].

John's Baptism:

1. Although John's baptism had its roots in heaven [Mark 11:30], yet it was a mere model that outlined Christ's baptism that followed. The former prepared the Jews in a special way to enable them to accept Christ and His Kingdom.

2. Although it was a step towards repentance, yet it could not regenerate a second birth for the person who received it, for the Holy Spirit was not there.

Christ's Baptism:

It is one of water and of the Spirit, and carried out in the name of the Holy Trinity. through it, the baptized receives

1. Paul Bassily, Model Sermons, Vol. 3 (Cairo, Egypt: Coptic Theological College, 1968), pp. 139-142.

forgiveness of sins; **a** second birth and the gift of becoming God's adopted child.

"**He that Hath the Bride is the Bridegroom"**

John the Baptist’s disciples objected to the fact that Christ has become more popular than their rabbi, John. John answered them saying; "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven." He then assured them that he is not the Christ, who is the real bridegroom; he is but the friend of the bridegroom. John has introduced the bridegroom to the bride (the people) and when this was accomplished John retreated and "decreased," but Christ (the real bridegroom) has "increased." In this manner, John rejoices as the friend of the bridegroom and declares, "This joy of mine is fulfilled" [John 3:29].

"He That Comes from Above is Above All"

This is a great testimony made by John the Baptist for Jesus Christ. Christ has always been the Word and has always therefore been above all. John the Baptist and the rest of the prophets were all human and were given the mission to testify to the Word from Heaven and for other humans here on earth. As for Christ He is the Lord Who came from Heaven and is, therefore, above all.

Hence, the Baptist's statement at the end of this chapter.

> *“He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified this, that God is true. He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he*

gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath.” [John 3:32-36].

Fourth Sunday[1]

The Gospel speaks about the enlightenment of salvation, as the man born blind said, *"I was blind but now I see"* [John 9:25], and also his answer to Jesus about whether he believed in the Son of Man, *"Lord, I believe,' and he worshipped Him"* [John 9:38]. The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the testimony of books about Jesus and the Matins' Gospel about His body who revives and enlightens who receive it.

The Epistles speak about the same subject: the Pauline about the humility of those who are enlightened, the Catholic about the necessity to pray for the believers who sin, and the Acts about the acceptance of their repentance.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"He answered and said: Whether He is a sinner or not, I do not know. One thing I know, that though I was blind, now I see'" [John 9:25].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 61.

"Knowing that God is faithful and mighty, have faith in Him and you will share what is His. If you are depressed, you do not believe. We all believe that He is mighty and we believe all is possible to Him. As for your own affairs, behave with faith in Him about them too, for He is able to work miracles in you also" (Abba Euprepius).

The Fourth Sunday of Tobi: John 9:1-38

'The blind man' [1].

Jesus meets a man who was born blind. Having applied a mixture of clay and spittle to his eyes, He sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man received his sight, and became the object of hostile curiosity and insidious questions from the Pharisees. However, when they said that Jesus was a sinner, the blind man protested saying that a sinner has not the power to give sight to a blind man. The Pharisees expelled the blind man and he was found by Jesus Who asked him if he believed in the Son of God. "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe in Him?" the blind man asked. Jesus answered, "Thou has both seen Him, and it is He that talks with you." The man said: "Lord, I believe," and worshipped Him.

This episode illustrated the words of the Prophet Isaiah “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened," and what Jesus

1. Monk of the Eastem Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord (Crestwood. New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Pmss, 1980), pp. 196-199.

Himself had said, "The Spirit of the Lord has sent Me to preach..., recovering the sight of the blind."

It is certain that physical blindness, while being the immediate object of Jesus' solicitude, here symbolizes the spiritual blindness from which He healed men; but the healing in the Gospel we have just read cannot be separated from the good will and sincere faith of the blind man himself.

MEKHOR

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	81:6,5	14:1,3	16:13,3	91:2,3
Gospel	John6:15-21	John4:46-53	John5:39-47	Luke17:1-10
Matins				
Psalm	118:8,105	23:3,4	88:30,29	88:9,1
Gospel	John8:51-59	John3:17-21	John12:44-50	Luke17:11-19
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	1Cor.5:11 6:11	Heb.7:1-17	Heb.3:1 4:2	1Cor.1:1-16
Catholic Epistle	2Pet.3:14-18	2John1:1-13	Jude1:14-25	James1:13-21
Acts	9:3-9	18:9-21	20:7-16	8:5-13
Psalm	95:5,3	95:6,7	88:1,5	23:1,2
Gospel	John6:22-27	John6:5-14	John6:27-46	Luke19:1-10

SUNDAYS OF MEKHER

The Saviour's Table

The Gospels of these four Sundays revolve around one subject the Saviour's table, that is, the spiritual food the Savior offers to His people.

First Sunday [1]:

The Gospel Speaks about the Saviour's splendor who Offers this food. As Jesus told the multitudes who followed Him after He performed the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, "Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On Him God the Father has placed His seal of approval." The Vesper's Gospel speaks about peace, that the Saviour grants to those who accept this food, and the Matins' Gospel about the eternal life that He gives to them.

The Epistles speak about the food that spoils, the Pauline demonstrates That those who live for that food will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, the Catholic warns against being swayed by it, and the Acts demonstrates the failure of those who work by it.

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1. The Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because the Father has set His seal on Him" [John 6:27].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Just as one cannot build a ship unless one has some nails, so it is impossible to be saved without humility" (Amma Syncletica).

The First Sunday of Mekher [1]: John 6:22-27

This text reveals kinds of people who followed Christ:

1. Some people followed Christ out of total faith like the many thousands who followed Him believed in Him, and enjoyed all the spiritual and physical blessings He bestowed on them by forgiving their sins, healing their sicknesses and satisfying their needs.

2. Some people followed Christ to try Him, like the Scribes, the Pharisees, the Praetors, and the Sadducees. They were all trying to trap Him even by His own words.

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1. Paul Bassily, Model Sermons, Vol. 4 (Cairo, Egypt: Theological College, 1971), pp. 40-46.

3. Some followed Christ merely for their physical benefit, like those who ate the bread and the fish, which they had free until they were filled. They were also healed.

When their wishes were granted, they spoke to Jesus saying, "Rabbi, when camest Thou hither?"

It is about the last kind that the Bible text of the day deals. Christ answered them saying, "Verily, verily, 1 say unto you, you seek Me, not because you saw the miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled."

Until this day, we find people following Christ for their mere physical benefit, like those mentioned in this text and referred to elsewhere in the Bible:" Their stomachs are gods and their glory is in what they hoard." Following Christ should emanate from our total love and our Holy Communion with Him. That is why Christ declared, "Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life which the Son of Man shall give unto you" [John 6:27]. Meat that perishes is all that is worldly, perishable desire; the things that the eyes see and desire as well as haughty means of living:

(a) the desires of the flesh: meat is made for the flesh and flesh is made with meat, and God will do away with both of them.

(b) the things the eyes desire: the woman saw that the tree was good for food and it was pleasant to the eyes, so she took of the fruit and did eat and gave also unto her husband with her and he did eat.

(c) haughty means of living.

Meat that endures is:

(a) the Body and Blood of Christ: he who eats My body and drinks My blood lives in Me and I in him.

(b) the Word of God: man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

(c) faith that works: faith without works is dead.

Second Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the Saviour’s offering to His people, as He filled them from the biblical food as pointed out in the miracle of the five loaves and the two fish. The multitudes praised Him saying, "Surely this is the prophet who is to come into the world."

The Vespers' Gospel deals with the belief in Him, after witnessing His miracles, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about the salvation of those who believe in Him.

The Epistles speak about the "biblical food,": the Pauline about the greatness of the one who offered it, symbolized by Melchizadek who offered the bread and wine to Abraham, the Catholic warns against accepting those who do not

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 6.

follow the Bible, and the Acts ask the servants of the Bible to maintain this teaching.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said: 'This is truly the prophet who is to come into the world'" [John 6:14].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"It was revealed to Abba Anthony in his desert that there was one who was his equal in the city. He was a doctor by profession and whatever he had beyond his needs he gave to the poor and every day he sang the Sanctus with the angels."

The Second Sunday of Mekher: John 6:5-14

"The miracle of the five loaves and the two fish[1]"[1]

This is the miracle mentioned in the four Gospels and which had a great effect on the multitudes.

1. M.E. Mikhail, The Miracle of the Five Loaves and the Two Fish (Cleveland, Ohio: St. Mark Coptic Orthodox Church, 1985).

1. Christ called His disciples here to labor not by what they can see but by faith. Philip told the Lord that two hundred penny worth of bread is not sufficient for them that every one of them may take a little. Andrew said to the Lord, "There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two small fish; but what are they among so many?" Christ, though, wants to teach us how to depend totally on Him and to labor according to our faith. Through faith, we can always see the hand of God giving and only the good. What is little not only becomes plenty in the hands of the Lord, but also overflowing.

2. Christ asked His disciples to make the men sit on the grass in ranks by fifties, a thing that teaches us a lesson of order and discipline, for our God loves order rather than confusion.

3. Our Lord took the loaves and the fish, looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to His disciples to distribute among the multitude. Our Lord could have distributed the loaves and the fish by Himself among the multitudes, but out of His love and humility, He wished to make His disciples join in the work He was doing. The text denotes to how the Lord chooses His disciples to whom He entrusted various responsibilities; He is always the first to bless and sanctify those responsibilities.

4. We should not forget the lad who gave our Lord all that he had. It was because of his act of love and charity that our Lord blessed and fed the multitudes. We should learn to give abundantly and to develop our faith to such a point so as to give in the same manner like the lad.

5. The multitudes numbered five thousands, not counting the women and the children which means that the whole crowd could have reached approximately 20,000. All this crowd ate and were filled, a thing that brings out the magnitude of the miracle. Truly, what is little could become abundant in the hands of the Lord. Moreover, He opens for us the windows of heaven and pours us out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

6. Christ asked His disciples to gather up the fragments that remained. When they did, they filled twelve baskets. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the one who gives generously and pours His blessings to us in abundance, yet He does not waste anything. He teaches us that frugally is a virtue while parsimony is a vice. He teaches us to be generous, yet frugal, and not miserly or parsimonious.

Third Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the blessing of life that the Saviour grants to those who partake from His spiritual food, as Jesus declared, *'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty"* [John 6:35].

The Vespers' Gospels speaks about His Divine Source, and the Matins' Gospel about the judgement of those who do not guard it.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 189.

The Epistles speak about the spiritual food that the Saviour offers to His people: the Pauline about the punishment of those who refuse it, the Catholic about the necessity to be attached firmly to it, and the Acts about the comfort of those who apply it.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst"' [John 6:35].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"These three things are the most helpful of all: fear of the Lord, praying, and doing good to one's neighbour" (Abba Poemen).

The Third Sunday of Mekber: John 6:27-46

"God's Table" [1].

Sermon of St Augustine to the Beginners in Faith:

This bread which you see on the altar and which is sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ, and this cup is the blood of Christ, by them Jesus wants to give us His body

1. St. Mary Church and Monastery, El Osra El Masiheya wa El Keraat El Kanaseyah (Cairo, Egypt: El Maadi, 1983), pp. 349-

and His blood which He shed for the sake of forgiving our sins. So, if you receive with merit, you become one body, as St. Paul said, *"For we, being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" [* 1 Cor. 10: 17]. So, he discussed the secret of God's table: one bread, one body, are those who partake in that one bread. So, he put in front of us, how much we should love the unity as is this bread made of one seed of grain? Has not it been made of many seeds? But before it became one bread, it was ground and then united by water till it took the shape of the bread we know. Also, you entered between the stones of the quern by the gift of repentance and denial of the spirits of evil with the humility of fasting. Then, you came to the Baptism, so you became similar to the bread, but which needs the fire of the furnace, i.e. the sacrament of Chrismation, because through it, we receive the Holy Spirit, which is our fire. The Holy Spirit declares Himself by tongues of fire because He will burn the love inside our hearts. So He acts as the fire after the water to make us one bread in the one body of Christ, and here we understand the meaning of the Unity.

Really true and lofty are these Sacraments that we should take it with great respect, as St. Paul said: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord" [1 Cor. 11:27]. Unworthily here means to take it without repentance. So, you should take this sacrament while we are united with a heartily Union, and your hearts are always towards things above where Christ sits because what you hope is not on the earth but in the heaven, so let a powerful faith be within you because, in this life, you trust in

what you are not seeing and you will see in the coming life, whereby you will be happy with an endless joy.

Fourth Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the salvation of those who accept the spiritual food offered by Jesus Christ, as He said about Zacchaeus, *"Today, salvation has come to this house, because this man, too is a son of Abraham"* [Luke 19:9].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about forgiveness to those who repented and the Matin's Gospel about forgiving their sins.

The Epistles speak about the spiritual food that the Master offers to His people: the Pauline about asking the believers to be united together, the Catholic encourages them to accept it with humility, and the Acts about the people believing when it is preached among them.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And Jesus said to him: Today, salvation has come to this house because he, also, is a son of Abraham' " [Luke 19:9].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A rich man is not one who has much, but one who gives much; for that remains his forever" (St. John Chrysostome).

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1. Banoub Abdou, Kenoz El-ne'ma, VoL 1-6 (Cairo, Egypt 1964), p. 749.

The Fourth Sunday of Mekher [1]: Luke 19: 1-10

The Gospel of this Sunday talks about the conversion of the publican, Zacchaeus. **As** Jesus passed through Jericho**,** this rich publican, being short climbed a tree, to see Him better. Jesus Christ our Lord said to Zacchaeus, *"Make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at your house"* [19:5]. Jesus is saying to us what He said to Zacchaeus: He wants to come into our house, i.e. into our souls.

For Zacchaeus to come down means leaving his observation position on the sycamore tree and getting back to earth. For us, it also means renouncing all those poor artifices by which we try to raise ourselves above other men.

Zacchaeus obeyed and hurried down, and here, we notice two points: First, that he received Jesus joyfully, as Jesus is not a guest with whom we have to stand on ceremony or welcome formally. We do not think about reception rooms, but we should receive Him joyfully and say to Him, "Make Yourself at home."

Due to an inner change, Zacchaeus announced to the Lord that he is going to pay four times the value of anything he might unjustly have charged for, and that he is going to give half his goods to the poor.

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1. Monk of the Eastem Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord (Crestwood, New York, St Vladimir's Seminary Press. 1980), pp. 94-96

Those who witnessed this Gospel scene murmured that He was going to be the guest of a man that was a sinner, but Jesus declared that the Son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost.

PAKHONS

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	Both weeks are included In the Great Lent		78:14,8	45:10,11
Gospel			Matt.22:34-40	Matt.22:41-46
Matins				
Psalm			73:11,16	46:6
Gospel			John24:1-12	John20:1-18
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle			Heb.11:1-10	1Cor.14:18-33
Catholic Epistle			1John4:15 5:4	3John1:1-7
Acts			13:44-52	11:2-18
Psalm			67:25,19	65:2,1
Gospel			Luke10:25-37	Luke4:1-13

SUNDAYS OF PAKHONS

Trusting in the Saviour

Third Sunday [1]:

All the readings speak about one subject: Trusting in the Saviour.

The Liturgy Gospel speaks about the life of faith as the Saviour said to the expert in the Law, who answered that the core of faith is to love God and the relatives, *"You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live*" [Luke 10:28].

The Vepsers' Gospel speaks about the core of trusting in God, which is the law of love, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the same subject: the Pauline about the meaning of the faith, the Catholic about the faith in the Divinity of Christ as the core of Christianity, and the Acts about the faith in the Word of God which had spread by the preaching of St. Paul and Barnabas.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarous] The Sundays, the Weekday, the Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Pentecost Lectionary (Cairo, Egypt: 1974), P. 8.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live" [Luke 10:28].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers "I no longer fear God, but I love Him; for love casts our fear" John 4:18 (Abba Anthony).

The Third Sunday of Pakhons: Luke 10:25-37

"The Good Samaritan" [1]

It is a parable showing the compassion of the Samaritan on the attacked Jew who was wounded by thieves on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. The aim of this parable is not to contrast the inhumanity of the priest and the Levite who pass by with the generosity of the Samaritan who tended and took charge of the wounded Jew, nor to condemn the ethnic and religious antagonism between the Jews and the Samaritans, but to proclaim this general truth: that my neighbour is not exclusively someone connected to me by blood or creed, but that my neighbour is, at each instant, someone whom God has brought near me, has put in my path. My neighbour is the person 1 become close to through serving his need, even if he is a stranger or an enemy. It depends very largely on me whether this or that man does or does not become my neighbour.

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1. Monk of the Eastem Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), p.48.

On another plane, the Samaritan represents Jesus himself, who pours wine and oil on the wounds of the human race and makes Himself the neighbour of every man.

Fourth Sunday [1]

All readings of this day speak about one subject: Saviour Worship, as He said to Satan, *"It is written: Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'"* [Luke 4:8].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Divinity of the Saviour, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the same subject: the Pauline about the effect of faithfuls on unfaithfuls in worshipping God, the Catholic about accepting the foreigners and the Acts about the acceptance of the Word of God by the Gentiles and the descending of the Holy Spirit on them.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And Jesus answered and said to him: 'It has been said: you shall not tempt the Lord your God'" [Luke 4:12].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"As he was dying, Abba Benjamin said to his sons, 'If you observe the following you can be saved: Be joyful at

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 44.

all times, pray without ceasing, and give thanks for all things.' "

The Fourth Sunday of Pakhons: Luke 4:1-13

"Christ's temptation" [1]

Jesus fasted forty days to give us an example to follow. Then the devil tempted Him by the following three temptations:

1. Expecting that hunger would aid his wickedness, the devil said to Jesus, "If Thou be the Son of God, bid this stone become bread." The same devil prevails over us by taking our infinities to aid his plots and enterprises. We notice that he approached Jesus as an ordinary man and as a saint, but Jesus did not give him the chance to know His divinity as He told him that a man shall not live by bread alone. That is to say, if God grants a man the power, he can live and work without bread, so why should He make the stone as bread.

2. The devil showed Him all the kingdoms of the world from a mountain and promised to give them to Him if He worshipped him. How wicked is the devil to promise the King of all that which is His own. Jesus answered, "It is written, thou shall worship the Lord thy God and Him only thou serve." This was striking because before His advent, Satan had deceived all under heaven and was himself everywhere worshipped.

3. The third temptation was that of vain-glory as the devil said to Jesus, "Cast Thyself down hence, as a proof of Thy

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1. Saint Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke (Studion Publishers, inc., 1983), pp. 85-90.

divinity." Jesus did not fill with vanity, but answered, "It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, for God does not give His help to those who tempt Him but to those who believe in Him." Also, Jesus refused to make miracles to those who tempted Him.

PAONI

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	9:6	15:7,8	6:1 , 23:15	83:9,5
Gospel	Matt.17:1-13	Luke4:38-41	Matt.7:7-12	Matt.5:34-48
Matins				
Psalm	66:1	33:1,2	37:22,23	60:4,7
Gospel	Matt.28:1-20	Mark16:2-8	Luke24:1-12	John20:1-18
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	Rom.15:13-29	1Cor.2:6-16	1Cor.4:1-16	Col.4:2-18
Catholic Epistle	1Pet.1:1-9	2Pet.1:1-9	2Pet1:19 – 2:9	James5:9-20
Acts	12:25 – 13:12	12:25 – 13:12	17:1-12	18:1-11
Psalm	142:9,8	12:6	60:4,7	68:26,27,25
Gospel	Luke11:1-13	Luke5:17-26	Matt.12:22-37	Luke6:27-38

SUNDAYS OF PAONI

Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

The Gospels of the four Sundays revolve around the fellowship of the Holy Spirit with the Disciples as the Saviour promised His Disciples that the Father will be sending to them.

First Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the gift of the Holy Spirit to the believers who seek Him. As Jesus said to His Disciples, *"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him"* [Luke 11:13].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the glory of His Divinity, and the Matin's Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Holy Spirit: the Pauline about His strength, the Catholic about His inheritance, and the

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate. The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarous] the Sundays, the Weekday, the Great Lent, the Holy Week, and the Pentecost Lectionary (Cairo, Egypt: 1974, P. 95.

Acts about His miraculous work among those who refuse Him.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him" [Luke 11:13].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"The saints are like a group of trees, each bearing different fruit, but watered from the same source. The practices of one saint differ from those of another, but it is the same Spirit that works in all of them" (Abba John).

The First Sunday of Paoni: Luke 11: 1-13

"The Lord's Prayer" [1]

1. This prayer begins with a petition to God as "Our Father." There was no such prayer before this teaching of Christ. The Old Testament did not address God as "Abba Father" [Romans 8:15], so this name of "Father" for God was given by Christ, the Divine Son of God.

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1. "Spirituality," in The Orthodox Faith, Vol. IV (New York: Department of Religious Orthodox Church in America, 1976), pp. 118-123.

2. "Who art in heaven": The statement that God the Father is in heaven means that He is everywhere and over all things.

3. "Hallowed be Thy name" means that God's name is holy and should be treated with respect and devotion.

4. "Thy Kingdom come" means we wish that God's Kingdom would fill all creation with Divine glory and life.

5. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven": This statement is the center of the Lord's Prayer, i.e. the whole purpose of the prayer is to do the will of God. This is what Jesus prayed and did [Mt. 26:42], and this is what His followers should do.

6. "Give us this day our daily bread." It means all of our bodily needs and in a spiritual tradition it means the nourishment of our souls by the Word of God, Jesus Christ, who is the "Bread of Life."

7. "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." This statement has been emphasized' by the Lord [Mt. 6:14, 15]. The only way that God will forgive us is if we forgive each other.

8. "Lead us not into temptation." means that we ask God not to let us be found in situations in which we are overcome by sin.

9. "Deliver us from evil." There are two ways in front of man: God and life, or devil and death. So, this statement means salvation and redemption from every falsehood,

foolishness, deceit, wickedness and inequity that leads to destruction and death.

10. The Church adds the statement, "Through Christ Jesus our Lord..." because we have to do everything in the Name of Jesus Christ.

Second Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the forgiveness of sins that the Saviour performs through the power of His Holy Spirit, as He said to the paralytic, *"Friend, your sins are forgiven."* [Luke 5:20].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Saviour's healing of illnesses of the body by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the work of the Holy Spirit: the Pauline refers to Him as the Spirit of Wisdom and Knowledge, the Catholic about referring to Him as the Spirit of Holiness and Purity, and the Acts as the Spirit of Justice and Authority.

GOLDEN TEXT:

So when He saw their faith, He said to Him. *"Man, your sins are forgiven you*". [Luke 5.:20]

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 98.

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Wherever Abba Isidore addressed the brothers in Church, he said only one thing, 'Forgive your brother, so that you also may be forgiven.'"

The Second Sunday of Paoni: Luke 5:17-26

"Healing the Paralyzed Man" [1]

This Gospel speaks about serving the paralysed persons and asking Christ for them. It is the Gospel of the merciful hearts, which do not get rest except by sacrifice, and do not stop except by the occurrence of miracles in which the Name of Jesus Christ is glorified.

1. The paralysed man: a man who cannot move. He is thrown on his bed with the shadow of death covering him because of the sin he has done. Also, among us, there are many persons who are paralysed by sin so they cannot come to God.

2. The four men: the friends of the paralysed man who carried him to the Christ. We should have these merciful hearts so that we take care of the spiritually paralysed persons and bring them to Jesus. The most important qualities of these men are:

(a) Self-denying. This is essential in serving the paralyzed souls as those four men worked

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1. Luka Sedarous, Ta-amolat Roheia fe Keraat Anageel Ahad El Sana El Kebtia (Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Church, 1981), pp. 43-48.

without being known, so there are no positions or names or honors, which can jeopardize serving the paralysed persons. So we should do the work of God with self-denying.

(b) Faith. This characterizes these four men as the Gospel said that when Christ saw their faith, so the life of faith in Jesus Christ accompanied with good acts are the basis of our salvation and those we serve.

3. The sin is the root of sickness. The Saviour said to the paralysed man, "Your sins are forgiven," before He ordered him to carry his bed and walk because Jesus Christ cares first to drive out the sin before any apparent work.

4. Forgiving of sins. The Saviour showed in this miracle His authority to forgive sins and He proved this by healing the disease of the body. Here the body acts as witness to what invisibly happens inside the soul as when Christ carried the heaviness of our sins by His death on the cross.

5. "Get up and carry your bed." The sign of health of that person is his ability to carry his bed, or his cross. By this, all people certified that he had gained strength of resurrection and new life. It is a sign of the life for us, to carry the cross and this is our strength. After we had tasted the death of the cross and the shame of sin to carry the cross all our life is a sign of healing of the soul and its new life.

Third Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about driving out of demons by Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit, as Jesus said to the Pharisees, *"But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you"* [Mt.12:28].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the fortunes He gave to those who asked Him, and the Matins' Gospel commemorates Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the work of the Holy Spirit with the Apostles and preachers: the Pauline about their loyalty and endurance, the Catholic about their proper teaching by His inspiration, and the Acts about the belief of many people in their teachings.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"For by your words, you will be justified, and by your *words you will be condemned*" [Mt. 12:37].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A brother asked Abba Sisoes, Did Satan pursue them like this in the early days?' The old man said to him, 'He does this more at the present time, because his time is nearly finished and he is enraged."

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1 . Coptic 0rthodox Patriarchate, p. 214.

The Third Sunday of Paoni: Matthew 12:22-37

"Overcoming the Devil" [1]

1. Christ presents to us a new method for worship and true spiritual behavior. He also presents to us a manner by which to overcome the devil, explicit in His healing of the man possessed by the devil, blind and dumb. This amazed the whole people, who said, "Is not this the son of David?" The crowd recognized Him as the Son of David, the Messiah, the powerful King who can cast out the evil spirit, which has afflicted this man and rid him of his senses, his sight and his speech. Thus, the establishment of the Messiah's Kingdom meant the end of Satan's power, a power that could blind his spirit from seeing the heavenly glory, and could stop his tongue from glorifying the Almighty.

2. Whi1e the crowd saw Christ’s miracle as a proclamation of the establishment of the Kingdom of the Messiah, the Son of David, the Pharisees accused Him of being Beelzebub himself St. Augustine gave great importance to this narrative and emphasized the fact that Christ is not Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, since He casts out devils, but is the only Son of God, acting in conjunction with the Holy Spirit. Christ appeared in our midst destroying the kingdom of devils and establishing the spiritual Kingdom of God. Such power He exercised for the sake of all the nations, and handed down to His disciples so that they, in turn could proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God to the whole world.

3. Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is persistence to live in sin and non-repentance until the last breath. Blasphemy against the Son shall be forgiven unto men, but

1. Sedarous, pp. 422-450.

blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven. St. Augustine says in this respect, "All manner of sin and blasphemy against the Son of God shall be forgiven by the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit as long as the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is not there."

Our Lord Almighty says, "Whosoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven to him but whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven to him."

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit is greater than the person of the Son of God. St. Augustine clarifies to us this point as follows, "All manner of blasphemy shall be forgiven except that against the Holy Spirit, meaning non repentance and not distinguishing the third Person (Hypostasis) over the Second Person of God."

Fourth Sunday [1]:

The Gospel speaks about the gifts of the Holy Spirit to every one, as Jesus said to His Disciples, *"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because He is kind to the ungrateful and wicked"* [Luke 6:35].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about His holiness and the Matins' Gospel about Jesus' Resurrection.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 67.

The Epistles speak about the gifts of the Holy Spirit to the disciples: the Pauline about their wisdom the Catholic about their dedication and prayers, and the Acts about their evangelism.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But love your enemies, do good, and lend hoping nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Highest. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil" [Luke 6:35].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"If a man wants God to hear his prayer quickly, then before he prays for anything else, even his own soul, when he stands and stretches out his hands towards God, he must pray with all his heart for his enemies. Through this action God will hear everything that he asks" (Abba Zeno).

The Fourth Sunday of Paoni: Luke 6:27-38

"Loving one's enemies" [1]

The very short Gospel read on this day deals with loving one's enemies. The idea of not doing to others what we would not wish them to do to us was familiar to Jesus' Jewish contemporaries, and was a part of rabbinical

1. Monk of the Eastern Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord (Crestwood. New York St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1980), p. 1 8.

teaching. But, Jesus went beyond this negative precept and requires us to treat others, as we would like to be treated by them. However, this new commandment was misunderstood by us. We might be led into doing good to others in the hope that they would respond by doing good to us, and that there would be some sort of reciprocity between our attitude and theirs. That is why Jesus immediately insists on the principle of disinterestedness. Our love must be freely given and go out to those from whom we expect nothing in return. The climax of this Gospel is the saying, "Be you therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful."

For this phrase confronts us with all that is absolute and though one hesitates to say so, inaccessible in the Christian duty to love. To be merciful, as the Father is merciful, does not mean that our mercy can ever reach to the infinity of Divine mercy, but that as our own small measure, we should be inspired by the same feelings as the Father.

EPEP

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	19:7,10	127:1-5	51:7,8	58:8,14
Gospel	Luke9:1-6	Luke16:1-8	Luke14:7-15	Luke7:1-10
Matins				
Psalm	30:26,19	40:1,2	134:1,2	85:11,12
Gospel	Matt.28:1-20	Mark16:2-8	Luke24:1-12	John20:1-18
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	1Cor.9:1-27	Gal.1:1-24	1Tim.6:3-16	Phil.1:27 – 2:11
Catholic Epistle	1Pet.1:1-12	Jude1:14-25	James3:1-12	1Pet.1:25 – 2:10
Acts	5:12-21	5:19-23	18:12-23	19:11-22
Psalm	88:6	118:1,2	144:12,13	39:5,15
Gospel	Luke10:1-20	Matt.18:1-9	Luke9:10-17	John11:1-45

SUNDAYS OF EPEP

The Saviour’s Support to His Apostles

The four Gospels about the Saviour’s support to His Apostles.

First Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the Saviour’s authority to His Apostles to heal the sick and drive out the demons, as Jesus said to them *“I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you"* [Luke 10: 19].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about Jesus answering their requests and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Saviour’s authority to His Apostles: the Pauline about their evangelism the Catholic about the salvation of the people, and the Acts about His numerous miracles.

1. The Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarous] The Sundays, the Weekday, the Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Pentecost Lectionary (Cairo. Egypt: 1974), p. 185.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"Behold, 1 give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you" [Luke 10: 19].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"The greatest thing a man can do is to throw his faults before the Lord and to expect temptation to his last breath" (Abba Anthony).

The First Sunday of Epep: Luke 10: 1-20

"Sending the Apostles"[1]

1. When Jesus Christ sent His Apostles, He enabled them the grace of the Holy Spirit, and crowned them by the power of doing miracles so that they might not be disbelieved by men nor is supposed to be selfcalled to the Apostleship:

(a) to be able to do miracles no one can do miracles unless God gives him the power and authority.

(b) the grace of the Spirit therefore witnessed of those who had been sent, that they were not persons who ran of themselves nor self-called to the duty of speaking concerning Christ, but that, on the

[1.] St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, Commentary on Gospel of Saint Luke, Vol. 1 (Studion Publishers, Inc., 1983), pp. 273-274.

contrary, they had been appointed to be ministers of His message.

2. The authority, however, which they bore to reprove evil spirits and the power of crushing Satan was not given so much that they might themselves be regarded with admiration, as that Christ might be glorified by their means, and be believed by those whom so great glory and supremacy and might, as to be even able to bestow upon others the power of trampling Satan under their feet.

3. When Jesus says, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" He means that he was cast down from on high to earth, from overweening pride to humiliation, from glory to contempt, from great power to utter weakness. This is true because before the coming of the Saviour, Satan possessed the world, but because the only begotten Word of God has come down from heaven, Satan has fallen like lightning.

Second Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the Saviour’s Law that defines the work of His Apostles, as He told them *"If your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away, it is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown in the eternal fire"* [Mt. 18:8].

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate p. 236.

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the spiritual blessings because they follow His law, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Saviour's Gospel that is preached by His Apostles: the Pauline about their preaching of only His Gospel, the Catholic about their faith in it, and the Acts about God saving them from their difficulties, because they preach it.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And if your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the everlasting fire" [Mt. 18:8].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A brother asked Abba Tithoes, 'How should I guard my heart?' The old man said to him 'How can we guard our hearts when our mouths and our stomachs are open?'

The Second Sunday of Epep: Matthew 18:1-9

"Example of Humility" [2]

1. Jesus demonstrates a living example of humility with love and compassion as the most important steps that lead to the Kingdom of Heaven.

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1. Tadros Malaty. The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic Orthodox Church. 1983), pp. 387-400.

2. Christ's teachings and His mode of behavior have created anxiety in the hearts of His disciples to want to enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven. They have not, though, as yet been able to overcome their material thinking, which was part of their culture and their inheritance. They thought, therefore, that Jesus was talking about a worldly kingdom and an earthly power, which they yearned not only to partake of, but also to occupy a greater position in, than all the others were. Although this desire could have sprung from human weakness, which is the love of power and the fame tied with high positions, yet all longed to fill this emptiness with a non-lasting human yearning.

Pope Cyril the Great says in this respect, "What reaction took place among the disciples and was recorded is put to our benefit since we learned the lesson of humility. The Lord has rebuked the flaw in us as a smart physician putting an end to the disease that is in us by His commandment, that reaches deep in our hearts and ensures our salvation."

3. It was odd for them to see Christ calling a child and placing him in their midst as a living proof of a soul definitely entering into the Kingdom of Heaven. Christ presents the child as an example of a full spiritual life that is able to partake of the glory of the Kingdom. Christ stresses the importance of human's conversion and becoming like little children to be able to enter into the Kingdom. Without humility, a person will be cast away no matter how much worship and prayers he offers. A proud heart cannot enjoy union with the Son of God, who is humble, such a union being with Him in the Father.

St. Cyril the Great says in this regard, "Let our greatness be in our humility, our glory in our lowliness, and our desire to please God, bearing in mind what His wisdom guides us to. If you desire greatness, you have to be humble, more so to obtain the grace of God.

Third Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the Saviour's blessing of the biblical food that is being presented by His Apostles, as written in the Gospel, "Taking the five loaves and the two fish, He gave thanks and broke them, then he gave them to the Disciples to set before the people" [Luke 9:16].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about His invitation to the poor to attend the Wedding Feast and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about qualities of the Apostles: the Pauline about their spirituality and self-content, the Catholic about their virtue in not causing anyone to sin when they talked, and the Acts about their travelling to preach the Good News.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"Then he took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them and gave them to the Disciples to set before the multitude" [Luke 9:16]

1. Banoub Abdou, Kenoz el-ne'ma, Vol. 1-6 (Cairo, Egypt: 1964), p.744.

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Feeding the hungry is a greater work than raising the dead" (St. John Chrysostom).

The Third Sunday of Epep: Luke 9:10-17

"Feeding the Multitudes" [1]

1. From time to time, our Saviour went out from Jerusalem and other cities and towns, followed by multitudes. One day, after fishing His preaching to them the Disciples said, "Send them away, that they may go into the neighbouring villages and fields, and lodge and find victuals, for we are in a desert place."

2. Jesus refused their request and commanded them to supply them with food. This was, however, impossible in the eyes of the Disciples, for they had brought nothing with them but they found five loaves and two fish.

3. Jesus Christ multiplies that little many times, and looked up to heaven to ask a blessing from above, being intent in this also upon our good. For He is who fills all things, being the blessing that cometh from above, from the Father. That we may learn, when we break bread, that it is our duty to offer it to God, placing it, so to speak, upon our stretched out hands, and calling down a blessing upon it from above.

4. The result of the miracle was to satisfy a large multitude with food for there were as many as five thousand

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1. St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, pp. 213-215.

men besides women and children. Therefore, the feeding of such a multitude in the desert by Christ is worthy of all admiration.

Fourth Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the blessing of life that the Word of the Gospel grants to those who are dead because of sin as exemplified by the raising of Lazarus at the Saviour's words, *"Lazarus, come out.' The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face'* [John 11:43,44].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the power of the Word of the Saviour to heal from illness, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Word of the Gospel: the Pauline about the unity in Spirit, which is the goal of this word among the believers, the Catholic about its holiness, and the Acts about the miracles that could be performed through its power.

GOLDEN TEXT

> "And he who had died, came out bound hand and foot with grave clothes and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them 'Loose him and let him go' " [John 11:44].

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 64.

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Always keep your death in mind and do not forget the eternal judgement, then there will be no fault in your soul" (Abba Evagrius).

The Fourth Sunday of Epep: John 11: 1-45

"Raising of Lazarus from death"

1. Lazarus was sick, so the first idea that came in the minds of Mary and Martha was to ask Jesus, saying, "Lord, that whom You love is sick," but the only thing done by Jesus was that He assured their messenger saying, "This disease is not for death but for the glory of God." Jesus remained in His place for two days and then moved across the Jordan to Judea in another two days, so when He arrived in Bethany, Lazarus was in the grave four days. Jesus' delay was aimed at giving chance for the news of his death to spread in Jerusalem and Judea, and the remaining of Lazarus in the grave for four days, so that the miracle became evident.

2. Jesus came to Bethany, and seeing that Mary and the Jews were weeping, He groaned in the Spirit and said, "where have ye laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see," and He came to the grave; He wept so the accompanying Jews said, "Behold, how He loved him." Here, St John Saba, the spiritual hermit said, "You who wept for Lazarus and flooded the tears of sorrow and sadness, may you accept my tears of bitterness. Take me away from

my pains by your sufferings. Heal the wounds of my poor soul by your blessed wounds."

3. Jesus said, "Take ye away the stone," but when Martha objected saying, "Lord, by this time he stinks; for he has been dead for four days," He said to her, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" Jesus lifted up His eyes and prayed and cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth." The dead came out, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin.

Jesus saith unto them "Loose him and let him go." This miracle proves the divinity of Christ and His absolute authority over life and death. It shows that the death of Lazarus was for the glory of God as Jesus said. In this occasion, St. Augustine said: "We cannot awake a sleepy person by the same simplicity used by Jesus to awake Lazarus from death."

MESORI

Sunday	First	Second	Third	Fourth
Vespers				
Psalm	32:19,16	118:112,113	5:5,10,11	118:131,138
Gospel	Mark6:45-56	Luke18:9-17	Luke18:9-17 11:27-36	Luke17:20-36
Matins				
Psalm	32:17,18	88:1,2	14:1,2,3	89:1
Gospel	Matt.28:1-20	Mark16:2-8	Luke24:1-12	John20:1-18
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	1Cor.9:1-27	Eph.6:1-23	Rom.16:17-20	1Thess.2:13-13
Catholic Epistle	1Pet.3:8-15	1John2:7-17	1Pet.2:18 – 3:7	James4:7 – 5:5
Acts	19:23-40	20:1-12	21:8-14	11:19-30
Psalm	79:13	88:4,11	27:2,8	88:9,10
Gospel	Luke20:9-19	Luke5:27-39	Mark3:22-35	Mark13:3-31

SUNDAYS OF MESORI

The Saviour's Care for His Church

The Gospels of the four Sundays speak about the Saviour's care for His Church.

First Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about reforming the Church by destroying the evil shepherds, as Jesus said the parable of the tenants of the vineyard, *"He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others"* [Luke 20:16].

The Vesper's Gospel speaks about God's mercy to the Church's shepherds and giving them His peace, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Church's shepherds: the Pauline about their evangelism without remuneration, the Catholic about them avoiding the evil, and the Acts about their rescue from uprisings against them.

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarous] The Sundays, the Weekday, the Great Lent, the Holy Week and the Pentecost Lectionary (Cairo, Egypt: 1974), p. 2.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said: Certainly not... [Luke 20:16].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"Someone asked Abba Anthony, 'What must one do in order to please God?' The old man replied, 'Pay attention to what I tell you; whoever you may be, always have God before your eyes, whatever you do, do it according to the testimony of the Holy Scripture, in whatever place you live, do not easily leave it. Keep these three precepts and you will be saved.'"

The First Sunday of Mesori: Luke 20:9-19

"Rejection of Christ by His people " [1]

In this parable, God called His people to share the blessings of His Kingdom, not as slaves or servants. But as tenants of His Kingdom.

He sent prophets to proclaim His message, then He sent His servants to receive the fruits, but the tenants beat, killed and stoned them.

Again, God out of love and compassion, sent His Son to receive the fruits of repentance and obedience, but the

1. George Mastrantonis, The Gospel Parables (St. Louis: LOGOS, 1981), pp. 13-14.

people killed Him and rejected the Lord's inheritance. Here, Jesus Christ foresaw His rejection by the people. He mentioned the prophecy of rejection that *'the stone which the builders refused is to become the headstone of the corner*' [Psalm 118:22,23].

Rejection of Christ takes place in various forms today, as it did in the past. It occurs, not only by denial of Christ, but especially by the lukewarm attitude toward the convictions of faith in Christ reflected in Christian moral behavior.

Second Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the Saviour's Law with the Good Shepherds of the Church, as He said to the pharisees when they criticized His Disciples for not fasting, *"No, new wine must be poured into new wineskins" [Luke* 5:38]. By His statement, Jesus points to His new Law that He gives to the shepherds and to the flocks of His Church.

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Saviour's support for them and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the Good Shepherds of the Church: the Pauline about their strength and their fighting against the evil powers, the Catholic about their love for everyone, and the Acts about the miracles they perform.

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 142.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"But new wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved" [Luke5:38].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"When asked about the benefits of fasting and watching man's self, the Old Man replied, “They make the soul humble, for it is written, *"Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins"* [Psalm 25:18] so, if the soul gives itself all this hardship, God will have mercy on it.'

The Second Sunday of Mesori: Luke 5:27-39

"Calling Levi" [2]

1. Levi was a publican, a man insatiable after filthy lucre, of unbridled covetousness; careless of justice in his eagerness after what was not his own, for such was the character of the publicans. Jesus Christ said to him *"Follow Me,"* and he left all and followed Him. That is why St. Paul said that Christ came to save the sinners [1 Tim. 1: 15].

2. Levi made a great meeting in his house attended by Jesus and a large number of tax collectors. The Scribes and Pharisees murmured against His Disciples, saying,

1. St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of St. Luke, Vol. 1 (Studion Publishers, Inc., 1983). pp. 113-116.

"Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered them that He, who is the physician of spirits, does not withdraw from those in need of Him.

3. After they received an explanation of their first accusation, they brought forward another fault saying that His Disciples did not fast, wishing to obtain hereby another opportunity against Jesus of disregard of the Law. But Jesus replied to them that now is the time of instructions, the time of calling, the children are being nursed up, those who are called are being fed with milk, fasting is not yet seasonable.

Third Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about tying up the devil by Jesus for the well-being of His Church, as Jesus said to the teachers of the Law when they accused Him of driving the demon by the power of Beelzebub, *"In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house"* [Mark 3:27].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about being enlightened by the Saviour, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the church's congregation: the Pauline warns the shepherds against the false teachers, the Catholic speaks about their obedience to their shepherds like

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate. p. 217.

women obeying their husbands, and the Acts about the sufferings that shepherds endure for Jesus, on their behalf.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house" [Mark3:27].

From the Saying of the Church Fathers:

"Abba Joseph asked Abba Sisoes, 'For how long must a man cut away the passions?' The old man said to him, 'Do you want to know how long? So long as a passion attacks you, cut it away at once."

The Third Sunday of Mesori: Mark 3:22-35[1]

This text revolves around two main topics: (1) Christ's sermon about division; and (2) Christ's teaching regarding His brothers.

Division: The Scribes accused our Lord of casting out devils by the power of the prince of the devils. This accusation was made by those who loved evil in order to confuse the people. That is why our Lord answered this accusation openly and clearly so that no one would ever again make the same accusation against Him. Our Lord's

1. Poulos Poulos, Selselet El Datel FA Rohey, Morshed Yomey Bel Ebada wa Derasat El Ketab El Mokadas, VoL 1 (Beny Suief, Egypt: St. Mark Diocese, 1981).

argument was strong and convincing: if one devil casts out another, then their kingdom will be divided against itself and cannot, therefore, stand. Satan will, no doubt, stop this from happening, unless he is compelled by stronger external forces.

Our Lord made it clear that division is a great evil that leads to disaster, a house divided against itself could not be called a whole Christian one since it would lack the happy spiritual traits. A person who has internal division is one who has good and evil forces fighting within him. Typically, humans always yearn for a good clean life, yet the life of sin appeals to them since the world with all its material pleasure is always a temptation for them. Division within a human is like a person lukewarm: neither cold nor hot but in between. This person is neither wholly with the Lord or wholly with the world and its pleasures. At the end, this person loses all.

Christ's Brethren: Christ shows us who His brethren are. A relationship should not necessarily mean one by blood, but one in which the parties involved have the same will and the same goals. The person close to God is the one who makes God's will his own, while the person close to the devil is the one who will do the devil's will. Whosoever loves to do good and loves his human brethren without any distinction is close to God. The closer our will is to Gods, the closer our relationship is to Him.

Fourth Sunday [1]

The Gospel speaks about the chosen ones from His Church by His Angels on His Second Coming, as Jesus said about Himself. *"At that time, men will see the Son of Man coming in cloud with great power and glory, and He will send His Angels and gather His elect from the four winds from the ends of the earth to the end of the heaven"* [Mark 13:27].

The Vesper's Gospel speaks about choosing the elect ones, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about Jesus' Resurrection.

The Epistles speak about the church's congregation: the Pauline about the searching of the shepherds for them, the Catholic about rebuking the rich one, who did not pay the workers for their labor, and the Acts about the many people who joined the Church because of the shepherds preaching and care.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"And then He will send His angels and gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of the earth to the farthest part of heaven" [Mark 13:27].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

When Abba Anthony thought about the depth of the judgements of God, he asked, "Lord how is it that some die when they are young, while others die on to extreme old

1. Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, p. 2.

age? Why are there those who are poor and those who are rich? Why do wicked men prosper and why are the just in need?" He heard a voice answering him "Anthony, keep your attention on yourself, these things are according to the judgement of God, and it is not to your advantage to know anything about them."

The Fourth Sunday of Mesori: Mark 13:3-37

"Signs of the Second Coming of Christ" [1].

The subject about the signs of the end was raised at a time when Jesus was alone with His disciples in a serene atmosphere after entering Jerusalem in which He purified the Temple and condemned the fig tree. We notice that Christ, in His words, does not plan for us to know the time when the end will come or witness a divine performance by which we follow the sequence of events. He gives us the signs of the future just to carry out his pastoral duty towards us, by urging His Church to be on a continuous watch and overcoming all obstacles confronting us until His second coming. He also warns us against the false Christs and the false prophets. He advises us to be on the watch continuously, awaiting His coming.

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1. Tadros Malaty. The Gospel According to St Mark (Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic 0rthodox Church, 1984), pp. 225-226.

Signs of the End

l. The destruction of the Old Temple [Mark 13:1, 2].
2. The appearance of many false Christs [13:3-6].
3. Wars and disasters happening [13:7, 8].
4. Persecutions [13:9-13].
5. The abomination of desolation [13:14].
6. Advisory steps to enter the Kingdom [13:5-18].
7. The great tribulation [13:19, 20].
8. The rising of false prophets [13:21-23].
9. The destruction of nature [13:24, 25].
10. The Second Coming of the Son of God [13:26, 27].
11 The Parable of the fig tree [13:28, 29].
12. The assurance of His Second Coming [13:30, 31].
13. Lack of knowledge about the hour [13:32].
14. The invitation to stay on watch [13:33-37].

Christ's farewell speech, if we may so call it, differs totally from any other given by a prophet or a spiritual leader before his death. Isaac, for instance, bade his two sons farewell in his old age. He was blind and could not distinguish between Jacob and Esau. Christ, on the other hand, talks to His disciples before His death on the Cross from a position of power, proclaiming to them that the powers of evil will not deter His plan for salvation. In such manner, He opens their hearts to see Him coming upon the clouds to carry them to glory.

The Little Month (Nasie)

Vespers :	
Psalm	40:12,11
Gospel	Luke 21: 12-23
Matins:	
Psalm	101:10,19
Gospel	Mwk 13: 32 - 37
Liturgy:	
Pauline Episde	2 Thess. 2: 1 - 17
Catholic Episde	2 Pet. 3: 1 - 18
Acts	2:14 - 21
Psalm	101:20
Gospel	Matt. 24: 3 - 25

SUNDAY OF NASIE

The Second Coming of the Savior[1]

All readings of this day speak about one subject, the Second Coming of the Saviour.

The Liturgy Gospel speaks about the ending of the world and the eternity of the Saviour as He said to His Disciples, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away'* [Mt. 24:35].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Second Coming of the Saviour, which is fearful, and the Matins' Gospel speaks about the sudden coming of the Saviour.

The Epistles speak about the same subject: the Pauline about the rebellion and the coming of the false prophet, the Catholic about the necessity of waiting for Christ in a sacred life and keeping away from the misleading people, and the Acts speaks about salvation of all who call by the name of God on the day of His coming.

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1. Coptic Orthodox Patrirchate. The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarous] The Sundays, the Weekdays, the Great Lent, the Holy Week, and the Pentecost Lctionary (Cairo, Egypt: 1974), p. 24.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will, by no means, pass away" [Mt. 24:35].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A man ought, at all times, to be aware of the judgements of God" (Abba Aghathon).

The Sunday of Nasie: Matthew 24:3-35

'The last times and the Second Coming of Christ'[1]

1. Accidents that occur before the Second Coming of Christ. Jesus did not announce the time of His second coming, but gave attention to some accidents preceding it, such as: the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, the coming of false prophets, wars and famines, persecution of Christians for the sake of Christ, loss of love and faith, spread of sin, the coming of the false Christ, and spread of the Gospel to all the world.

2. The second coming of Christ Jesus Christ announced His Second Coming as He, said:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds

1. St. Mary Church and Monastery, El Osra El Masehya wal Keraat El Kanaseia (Cairo, Egypt: El Maadi 1982), pp. 730-732.

of heaven with power and great glory, and He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other [Mt. 24:30, 31].

Also, St. Paul said:

"For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep, for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, od; and the dead in Christ shall rise first" [1 Thess. 4:15, 16].

3. Awakefulness and preparation. Thinking of the Second Coming of Christ urges us to keep awake and well prepared to meet Him as Jesus said:

"Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come, but know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up; therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh" [Mt. 24:42-44].

The Fifth Sunday of Any Month

Vespers

Psalm	92: 2, 93 :3,4
Gospel	Mt. 14: 15 - 21

Matins

Psalm	96:11,97..11,12
Gospel	Mark 6: 35 - 44

Liturgy

Pauline Epistle	1 Cor. 14: 18 - 25
Catholic Epistle	James 5: 1 - **8**
Ads	24: 1 - 9
Psalm	142:6,7
Gospel	Luke 9: 12 - 17

FIFTH SUNDAY OF ANY MONTH

The Saviour's Gospel

The Fifth Sunday of Any Month:

All the readings of the day speak about one subject: the Saviour's Gospel, as the Liturgy Gospel speaks about the evangelic food which was given by the Saviour to His people as the Gospel said: *"Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke them. Then He gave them to the Disciples to set before the people"* [Luke 9:16].

The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Saviour's blessings to His Gospel and the Matins' Gospel about the joy of the Gospel, which fills the hearts of the believers.

The Epistles speak about the Word of the Gospel: the Pauline about its usefulness, the Catholic about the punishment, which affects those who refuse it, and the Acts about the persecution of those who preach it.

GOLDEN TEXT:

"Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, He gave thanks and broke them. Then, he gave them to the Disciples to set before the people" [Luke 9:16].

From the Sayings of the Church Fathers:

"A mouth thanking God accepts Its blessings, and a heart always thanking and praising the Lord becomes full of grace" (Abba Isaac).

THE HOLY FEASTS OF THE CHURCH

I The Coptic New Year.

II The Head of the Church

A. Feasts of the Saviour: Major and Minor

B. His Glorified Cross

C. His Glorious Tomb

III The Body of the Church

A. The Mother of God

B. The Angels

C. John the Baptist

D. The Children of Bethlehem

E. The Three Fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

F. The Prophets and Innocents

G. The Preachers
   1. The twelve Disciples
   2. The seventy Apostles
   3. The evangelists

H. The Martyrs

1. The Fathers of the Church
1. The patriarchs

2. The bishops

J. The Monks

I. THE COPTIC NEW YEAR

The First of Thuout

The First of Thuout: Luke 4:14-30

His Blessing in the New Year. This chapter talks about the Blessing of the Saviour that He pours in the New Year over the poor and the oppressed, as He said: "To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor," and in the Psalm, the Church asks Jesus to bless the crops of the year with His goodness.

On the occasion of the New Year, St. Paul wrote, *"The old has gone, the new has come"* [2 Cor. 5:17], and urged the believers not to receive God's grace in vain, and to work for their salvation. *"Now is the time of God's favor; now is the day of Salvation"* [2 Cor. 6:2].

El Nayrouz Feast:

It is the day of the beginning of the Coptic Calendar, so it is a holy day full of purity and chastity. Let us start a new demeanor as St. Paul, the Apostle, said:

> *“Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things become new. And all things are of God Who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation”* [2 Cor. 5: 17, 18].

Isaiah the Prophet said:

> *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord* [Isaiah 61:1, 2].

David the Prophet said, "Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness, and Thy paths drop fatness [Psalm 65:11][1].

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1. St Mark and St. Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church. Coptic Synaxarium (Chicago, Illinois: 1985), p. 1.

II. THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

III.

A. Feasts of the Saviour

The Major Feasts

The Feast of Annunciation (Twenty-ninth of Baramhat)

The Annunciation of His Birth: Luke 1:26-38. This part of the Gospel talks about the Angel's Annunciation to the Virgin Mary. *"You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. "*

The Psalm praises St. Mary, saying *"Listen, 0 daughter, consider and give ear, the King is enthralled by your beauty; honor Him for He is your Lord"* [Psalm **45:10, 11].**

The Pauline Epistle testifies to St. Mary's faith: *"But now a righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe"* [Rom. 3:21, 22].

Annunciation:

The Feast of Annunciation comes nine months before Christmas, in which the Angel came to St. Mary and announced to her the birth of the Christ [Luke 1:26-38]. It is the feast of our own reception of the glad tidings of salvation

and our own glorification of St. Mary who became the mother of God in the flesh[1]

Christmas Eve (twenty-eighth of Khoiak)

The Birth of the Saviour: Luke 2:1-20.

The Gospel talks about the birth of the Saviour, "And she gave birth to her firstbom, a son. She wrapped Him in clothes and placed Him in a manger."

The Psalm of the Gospel points to His birth *"From the womb of the dawn you will receive the dew of your youth'* [Psalm 110:3].

In his Epistle, St. Paul wrote, *"But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under Law, that we might receive the full rights of sons"* [Gal. 4:4]; and also, *"So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God made you also an heir"* [Gal. 3:7].

Christmas Day (twenty-ninth of Khoiak)

His Inheritance: Matthew 2:1-12.

This part of the Gospel talks about the submission of the nations to the Saviour symbolized by the visit of the Magi who "Bowed down and worshipped Him."

1. Thomas Hoplo, The Orthodox Faith, Vol. II (New York: Worship Department of Religious Education, The Orthodox Church in America, 1976), pp. 136-137

The Psalm of this Gospel also talks about the submission of the nations, *"He said to me, 'You are my Son; today 1 have become Your Father. Ask of me, and 1 will make the nations Your inheritance"* [Psalm 2:7, 8].

In the Pauline Epistle, after St. Paul spoke about Jesus' birth, he warns us to pay attention: 'We *must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away... How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation"* [Heb. 2:1-3].

Second Day after Christmas (Thirtieth of Khoiak)

His Liberation of the Believers: John 1: 1-13.

"Yet to all who receive Him**,** to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." And the Psalm says, "And all nations will be blessed by Him.”

In the Epistle, St. Paul explains again the inheritance that the believer obtains and that the believer is no longer a slave.

The Christmas:

Christ was born of the immortality of His Father the God and of the virginity of His mother, St. Mary: of His Father without limit of time and of His mother without seed; of the Father as the source of life, of His mother as the end of death; of His Father ordering all days and of His mother consecrating this particular day.

God sent John to earth as His human precursor, so that he was born when the days were becoming shorter, while the Lord Himself was born when the days were growing longer, for human life ought to grow weaker in itself and stronger in Christ: "For He must increase, but I must decrease.”

All His angels worthily praise Him for He is their everlasting food: He is the Word of God. They praise Him as God, with God and they render glory to God on high. Let us praise Him in obedience. They are His messengers; we are His sheep. He filled their table in heaven and our manger on earth. He is the fullness of their table because in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He is the fullness of our manger because the Word was made flesh and dwelt anong us. The angels praise Him by living, we by believing; they by enjoying, we by seeking; they by obtaining we by striving to obtain; they by entering, we by Knocking.

Let us celebrate with the fervent devotion, His birthday in the form of a servant. Let us celebrate His birth of the Virgin in the nocturnal hours.

Since we do not comprehend how His name existed before the light of the Son, let us recognize His tabernacle placed in the Son. Since we do not, as yet, gaze upon the Son inseparably united with His Father, let us remember Him as the bridegroom coming out of His bride's chamber.

Since we are not yet ready for the banquet of our Father, let us grow familiar with the manger of our Lord Jesus Christ [1].

The Eve of the Epiphany (tenth of Tobi)

The Grace of His Baptism: Luke 3:1-18.

The Gospel points out that Jesus' baptism for His people will be *"with the Holy Spirit and with fire, "* and the Psalm says *"and Your lips have been anointed with grace"* [Psalm 45:2].

In his Epistle, St. Paul stressed unity *"in mind and thought among those who have fellowship with Jesus Christ"* [1 Cor. 1:1-17].

The Epiphany (eleventh of Tobi)

Jesus, the Son of God: John 1: 18-34.

This Gospel reveals that the baptized Jesus is the Son of God as testified by John the Baptist, "I have seen and 1 testify that this is the Son of God." Also, the Psalm "You are my God, and I will exalt you."

In the Epistle, St. Paul advised the believers to live self controlled, upright, and godly lives, because *"the grace of God that brings Salvation... He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit"* [Titus 2:11-3:7].

1. St Augustine, Selected Sermons, Vol. 38, St Paul editions.

The Second Day of Epiphany (twelfth of Tobi)

<u>His Divine</u> Splendor: John 1:35-51. This part of the Gospel points to the splendor of the Saviour, as declared by *Nathnael, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel." And the Psalm says, 'The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad...'* [Psalm 97:1, 2].

Epiphany:

It means shining forth, or manifestation. In our Orthodox Church, it is called the Theophany, which means the shining forth and manifestation of God.

The Epiphany is the first public manifestation of Christ. At the time of His birth, our Lord was revealed to a few privileged people, but in the Epiphany, the disciples of St. John the Baptist and the crowds witnessed that Jesus came to the banks of Jordan. This solemn manifestation consisted of two aspects:

1. The aspect of humility represented by the baptism to which our Lord submits;

2. The aspect of glory represented by the human witnesses that the precursor bears to Jesus, and on an infinitely higher plane, the divine witness that the Father and the Spirit bear to the Son.

The glorious aspect of Epiphany consists of the two testimonies solemnly given to Jesus:

1. John's testimony.

2. The divine testimony of the Father and the Spirit:

a. That of the Father was the voice that came from heaven and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"

b. That of the Holy Spirit was the descent of it like a dove .[1]

Easter:

It is the feast of feasts. In the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) the Alexandrian See was requested to undertake the duty of announcing the correct date of the Easter. The Popes of Alexandria used to announce the date in their Easter letters. St. Athanasious wrote 45 Easter letters.

It is the feast of deliverance from the bondage of sin and death and an expectation of the, Second Coming of Christ.

It is said, " that is the day, which has no night for its light is the Lamb" [Rev. 21:22-25].

The Resurrection of Jesus tells us that we can be changed. We need to feel the "new green" to which some sayings in the Holy Scriptures apply very well:

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1. A Monk of the Eastem Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord (Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir Seminary Press, 1980);pp. 82-86.

1. "Purge out therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened, for even Christ, our Passover sacrificed for us, therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" [1 Cor. 5:7,8].

2. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new" [2 Cor. 5:17].

3. "Like as Christ, we raised up from the dead even so we also should walk in newness of life" [Rev. 6:4].

4. "As new-born babies, desire the milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" [1 Peter 2:2][1]

The Minor Feasts

Circumcision Feast (sixth of Tobi)

His Salvation to the Believers: Luke 2:21-39.

This Gospel speaks about God's salvation to those who believe in His Son Jesus. As Simon said, "Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation."

Also, the Psalm refers to this salvation: *"Sacrifice thank offerings to God,"* and *"He who sacrifices thank offerings*

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1. Ibid., pp. 176-180.

honors Me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God" [Psalm 50: 14, 23].

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the worship of the Law, through the circumcision [Phil. 3:1-12].

The Feast of Circumcision:

It was a symbol to baptism and a sign of purification and a seal of God with His people, that is to say, by which a Jew becomes an organ in the Church of the Old Testament. God gave it as a covenant, at first**,** to Abraham [Gen. 17:26]. Our God Jesus Christ accepted circumcision for two causes:

1. To obey the Law that every Jewish male should be circumcised in the eighth day of his birth [Lev. 12:3].

2. To complete every righteousness as His baptism from John the Baptist; and without it, the Jews would not accept him as one of the people of God and would not permit His entrance to the Temple or His teaching. [1]

Presentation of the Lord Jesus to the Temple (eight of Mekher)

When the time of the purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "A pair of doves or two young pigeons."

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1. Yohanna Salama, El Laale El Nafisa fe Sharh Tokous wa Akaed El Kanisa (Egypt: St. George Library. 1979), p. 450.

When they presented Jesus, Simon took Him in his arms and said, *"Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace for my eyes have seen Your salvation"* [Luke2:29-32]. We ask our God that, as well as the Holy Spirit had led Simon to meet Jesus and had seen His salvation, we also can meet the Lord and can witness and depart in peace, since our eyes have seen the salvation of God in the Person of His Christ [1].

His Flight to Egypt: Matthew 2:13-23

This Gospel speaks about the Holy Family's flight to Egypt in order to save Jesus from King Herod. The Psalm refers also to this flight to Egypt [Psalm 105:36, 38].

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the grace of salvation, *"And in Christ Jesus those who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ"* [Eph. 2:1-22].

This was a great blessing and comfort to the people after the severe plagues which attacked them, and it was the beginning of a new life by the new knowing of God, and its purification from the diseases of idolatry, as it was said that all the idols fell down when Jesus entered Egypt, as Isaiah's prophecy had said [Isaiah 19:1-19][2].

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1. Thomas Hoplo, The Orthodox Faith, Vol. H, pp. 128-129.

2. Yohanna Salama, p. 453.

The Transferred Days (eight of Paoni)

Consecration of St. Mary's Church of Mostorod, Egypt: Where St. Mary sprung a well of water on her way back from Egypt.

Feast Day of the Wedding at Cana (thirteenth of Tobi)

His Divine Power: John 2: 1 -11. This Gospel speaks about Jesus' divine power by performing His first miracle of changing water into wine. St. John wrote, "This the first of His miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee. He thus revealed His glory and His disciples put their faith in Him."

The Psalm points also to this miracle, *"You are the God who performs miracles: You display Your power among the peoples... the water see You and withered"* [Psalm 77:14-16].

In His Epistle, St. Paul refers to that divine power that changes the believers from death in sin to being alive to God, as Jesus changed the water into wine [Rom. 6:3-16].

The Coptic Church celebrates this miracle as Jesus accepted the intercession of His mother, St. Mary, and transformed the water into wine by the authority of His divinity. This unique celebration is for three causes:

1. It is the first miracle done by Him.

2. By it, He showed His glory.

3. Due to it, many believed in Him.

4. The presence of Jesus in the wedding blessed the Sacrament of marriage[1].

The Feast of Transfiguration (thirteenth of Mesori)

Mark 9:2-13. This Gospel speaks about Jesus' Transfiguration on the mountain of Tabour: *'His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach.' The Psalm also says, "He has set His foundation on the holy mountain"* [Psalm87:1].

In his Epistle, St. Paul refers to the superiority of Christ: *"He is the image of the invisible God" [Col.* 1:1-23].

The Transferred Days Twenty-first of Baramhat

Jesus arrived to Bethany with His disciples where Lazarus (whom Jesus had raised from the dead) was among those reclining at the table with Him [John 12:1-8].

Transfiguration:

It has a significant moment in the earthly life of Christ and it is a focal point in the salvation of the Kingdom of God. It looks backward to the Old Testament as fulfilled in Christ, and forward to the great events of Pascha, the new

1. Ibid., p. 452.

Exodus (Cross, Resurrection, Ascension, and the Second Coming of Christ).

A few days before His transfiguration, Christ prepared the disciples by speaking about all these events [Mt. 16:21,27].

Witnesses of the Transfiguration. Jesus took Peter, John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray [Luke 9:28]. *"And was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light'* [Mt. 17:2].

St. Cyril of Alexandria explains that saying: "We say there is a transfiguration; note that the human body changes to another body, but a glorious light enveloped it, the form of the body stays the same, but its aspect is penetrated by a radiant light."

"And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him [Mt. 17:3].

St. Cyril of Alexandria also explains this: "Moses and Elias stood beside Him and talked with Him, so as to declare that the Law and the Prophets serve our Lord Jesus Christ, and prove evidently that He is the Lord of the Law and the Prophets, and together, they spoke of Him."

B. His Glorified Cross

The flooding of the Nile River in Egypt reaches its maximum on the Feast Day of the Cross (seventeenth of Thuout) and remains unchanged for three days before it recedes. The Coptic Church celebrates the Feast of the Cross on three successive days, starting on the 17th of Thuout.

The Feast of the Cross (seventeenth of Thuout)

The Power of the Cross: John 10:22-38. This Gospel speaks about the miracles that Jesus performed, for which He asked the Jews to believe in Him because it proves that he is in the Father and that the Father is in Him.

In his Epistle, St. Paul wrote, *"For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" [* 1 Cor. 1: 17-31].

On this day, the Church celebrates the appearance of the honorable Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was revealed by the lover of God, Queen Helena, mother of King Constantine, from under the pile of Golgotha after she had ordered its removal. This appearance was on the tenth of Baramhat, and as this day always comes during the Lent, it was substituted by the seventeenth of Thuout, which is the day of the Consecration of its Church.

The Transferred Days:

Tenth of Baramhat: Feast day of the Appearance of the Cross; this was mistakenly transferred to the 17th of Athor instead of the 17th of Thuout.

Twelfth of Mesori: King Constantine, the Great, was crowned. The Cross appeared to him between the stars and it had written on it: "With this you conquer." The king sent his mother, Helena who recovered the Holy Cross[1]

The Second Day of the Feast of the Cross (eighteenth of Thuout).

His Life: John 6:35-46. This Gospel speaks about the divinity of Jesus Christ: *"For I have come down from heaven... no one has seen the Father except the one who is from God. " The Psalm refers to the same, 'I will exalt You, my God the King; 1 will praise Your name forever and ever"* [Psalm 145:1, 2].

In his Epistle, St. Paul wrote, *"May I not trust except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"* [Gal. 6:11-18].

The Third Day of the Feast of the Cross (nineteenth of Thuout)

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1. Coptic Synaxarium (Chicago, Illinois: St. Mark and St. Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church, 1985), pp. 28-30.

His Inheritance: Luke 14:25-35. This Gospel shows that those who carry the Cross become disciples of Jesus Christ, or His heirs. As it is written in the Psalm.

C. His Glorified Tomb

Consecration of the Resurrection Church's Altar in Jerusalem (sixteenth of Thuout)

Christ's Acceptance of His People's Prayers: Matthew 16:13-19. As proven by Jesus' statement to Simon Peter, "Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven."

In his Epistle, St. Paul said that the tabernacle of the Old Testament was an illustration for the Church of the New Order [Heb. 9:1-10].

After Queen Helena, the mother of Constantine, had discovered Jesus' Cross, she and her son built **a** beautiful church in the place where the Cross was found. Then, King Constantine asked the Archbishop of Constantinople and St. Athanasious, Pope of Alexandria, to go to Jerusalem where they met the Archbishop of Antioch and the Bishop of Jerusalem and they all consecrated the church in 326 A.D. Then, they marched with the Cross around all the holy places, and they glorified the Cross. Then they returned to their chairs.

The Transferred Days:

Sixteenth of Mekher: Feast Day of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. (This day was transferred wrongly to the 16th of Thuout instead of the 26th of Thuout).

Third of Baramhat: feast Day of Pope Cosma the 58th. (This day was wrongly transferred to the 16th of Thuout instead of the 29th of Athor).

Twenty-eighth of Baramhat: Feast Day of Emperor Constantine, who ordered the construction of the Church's alter in Jerusalem.

Ninth of Pakhons: Feast Day of Queen Helena, who supervised the construction of the Church's alter in Jerusalem [1].

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1. St. Mark and St. Bishoy Coptic Orthodox Church. Coptic Synaxarium (Chicago, Illinois: 1985), pp. 27, 28.

WEEKDAYS LECTIONARY

Introduction

The weekdays lectionary is the biblical reading book which we read during the weekdays all over the year. The Coptic Calendar is divided into twelve equal months, each of which has thirty days in addition to a small month of five or six days, according to the type of year.

The Feast Days of the Holy Saints of the Church and its martyrs are divided into groups, each of which has its own readings.

There are sixty-nine different readings for the whole weekdays lectionary, so we select the proper reading according to these groups.

The Weekdays Rule:

Readings from Psalms, Gospels, Pauline Epistles, Catholic Epistles, and Acts follow this rule:

-The Gospel reading and the Pauline Epistle reading touch the same subject.

- Both Gospel readings of Vespers and Matins complement those of the Liturgy.

- The Catholic Epistles and Acts readings complement the topic touched by the Pauline Epistle.

A great historian said once that a good way to start historical analysis is by asking of a particular people what holidays they celebrate on their calendar. To understand the United States, for example, we have to look first at its calendar and the great events it celebrates, such as Thanksgiving Day and the Fourth of July.

In the same way, the religious calendar of the Orthodox Church reflects and expresses the whole history and faith of the Church.

St. Augustine said: "If you believe what you like in the Gospel and reject what you hate, it is not the gospel you believe in but yourself."

The Special and Transferred Days

The Coptic Church has devoted all the days of the year except Sundays for the celebration of the feast days of the saints, and the martyrs, whether individual or groups who participated in its foundation and strengthening, so that all the readings selected on these days are based on the Sinaxarium. the book which contains the life story of these saints and martyrs according to the date of their martyrdom, as follows:

1. If the Synaxarium of a certain day included the life story of more than one saint at a certain date, the Church choses the readings to be based on only one of these saints.

2. As some of these saints are considered to be in a higher degree than others, the Church devotes the readings to be based upon the greater saint to be read in the feast days of the saints of the same groups but with less rank. The feast days of the great saints are called the special days, and the feast days of the saints of lesser rank are called the transferred days.

Example: The 22nd of Tobi is one of the special days in which we celebrate the commemoration of Abba Anthony, father of all the monks, so that certain readings were selected to suit this occasion. If the Church celebrated the commemoration of another monk, e.g. St. Illarion the monk (24th of Paopi), or St. Bimin, the confessor and monk (9th of Khoiak), or St. Isaac, the priest of the cells (19th of Pakhons), or St. Abanoub, the confessor and monk (23rd of Paoni), it uses the same readings originally used in the feast day of St. Anthony, i.e. it had transferred their feast day readings to the 22nd of Tobi which is a special day. The same applies to all other groups. In order to understand this rule clearly, the next table indicates the number of the daily readings used in the weekday lectionary. This table is composed on sixty-nine basic readings for the special days which are outlined by the shape < >, and to which we refer all the other transferred days according to the numbers shown in the table.

Note: Because the Coptic Church has a special Calendar (the Coptic Calendar), there is a table showing the Coptic months and their equivalents in the Western Calendar. This table is entitled, "Comparison between the Coptic and Western Calendar," and it follows the table of the special and transferred days.

NUMBERS OF DAIILY READINGS DURING THE WEEKDAY LECTIONARY

Months / Days	THOUOT	PAOPI	ATHOR	KHOIAK	TOBI	MEKHER	FAMENOTH	FARMOUTH Y	PAKHONS	PAONY	EPEP	MESORI	THE LITTLE MONTH
1	<1>	39	54	18	<29>	15	19	48	<46>	29	39	17	<65>
2	<2>	54	24	52	54	<40>	23	56	57	<51>	45	39	<66>
3	54	18	15	46	<30>	48	24	54	29	23	<54>	<57>	<67>
4	3	41	23	55	<31>	12	15	19	24	17	17	3	<68>
5	39	18	22	3	21	13	23	3	3	37	<55>	38	<23>
6	3	39	18	54	<32>	17	22	39	43	56	29	39	<69>
7	54	48	43	40	18	54	19	3	54	43	40	9	
8	<3>	21	<14>	41	54	32	55	39	43	49	13	47	
9	23	18	<15>	37	13	57	48	37	4	3	45	17	
10	39	41	39	23	<33>	55	5	48	<57>	19	23	22	
11	44	54	9	52	<34>	24	8	39	23	44	44	23	
12	15	<10>	<16>	48	35	48	24	54	18	16	17	5	
13	18	48	54	9	<36>	44	<41>	19	37	67	23	<58>	
14	57	<11>	23	44	48	18	8	24	57	23	13	18	
15	29	56	<17>	18	3	52	39	29	10	17	57	39	
16	<4>	24	52	22	44	9	24	31	31	<52>	31	46	
17	<5>	54	<18>	57	52	44	23	55	23	37	39	<59>	
18	<6>	24	55	12	23	18	56	44	13	24	55	54	
19	<7>	56	41	23	19	48	29	23	37	43	19	13	
20	39	40	45	3	29	24	24	56	<48>	3	<56>	19	
21	<8>	3	18	55	46	55	58	8	57	46	41	39	
22	44	<12>	<19>	<25>	<37>	23	54	24	29	19	44	3	
23	8	23	23	3	23	44	3	<43>	45	37	22	43	
24	29	37	<20>	31	39	23	24	56	<49>	57	17	23	
25	3	21	<21>	40	48	56	11	39	21	29	21	<60>	
26	<9>	29	19	39	<38>	3	39	56	<50>	3	3	<61>	
27	17	<13>	<22>	23	44	18	13	<44>	23	45	43	43	
28	19	48	<23>	<26>	17	56	4	21	18	54	39	<62>	
29	39	22	<24>	<27>	39	31	<42>	29	57	48	55	<63>	
30	18	48	54	<28>	<39>	51	25	<45>	54	<53>	19	<64>	

Comparison between the Coptic and Western Calander

Days of Coptic Month	THOUOT	PAOPI	ATHOR	KHOIAK	TOBI	MEKHER	FAMENOTH	FARMOUTHY	PAKHONS	PAOPI	EPEP	MESORI	THE LITTLE MONTH(Nasie)	Days of Coptic Month
	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	
	C L	C L	C L	C L	C L	C L								
1	11 12	11 12	10 11	10 11	9 10	8 9	10	9	9	8	8	7	6	1
2	12 13	12 13	11 12	11 12	10 11	9 10	11	10	10	9	9	8	7	2
3	13 14	13 14	12 13	12 13	11 12	10 11	12	11	11	10	10	9	8	3
4	14 15	14 15	13 14	13 14	12 13	11 12	13	12	12	11	11	10	9	4
5	15 16	15 16	14 15	14 15	13 14	12 13	14	13	13	12	12	11	10	5
6	16 17	16 17	15 16	15 16	14 15	13 14	15	14	14	13	13	12	11	6
7	17 18	17 18	16 17	16 17	15 16	14 15	16	15	15	14	14	13		7
8	18 19	18 19	17 18	17 18	16 17	15 16	17	16	16	15	15	14		8
9	19 20	19 20	18 19	18 19	17 18	16 17	18	17	17	16	16	15		9
10	20 21	20 21	19 20	19 20	18 19	17 18	19	18	18	17	17	16		10
11	21 22	21 22	20 21	20 21	19 20	18 19	20	19	19	18	18	17		11
12	22 23	22 23	21 22	21 22	20 21	19 20	21	20	20	19	19	18		12
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14	24 25 25	24 25 25	23 24	23 24	22 23	21 22	23	22	22	21	21	20		14
15	26 26	26 26	24 25	24 25	23 24	22 23	24	23	23	22	22	21		15
16	27 27	27 27	25 26	25 26	24 25	23 24	25	24	24	23	23	22		16
17	28 28	28 28	26 27	26 27	25 26	24 25	26	25	25	24	24	23		17
18	29 29	29 29	27 28	27 28	26 27	25 26	27	26	26	25	25	24		18
19	30 30	30 30	28 29	28 29	27 28	26 27	28	27	27	26	26	25		19
20	31 1	31 31	29 30	29 30	28 29	27 28	29	28	28	27	27	26		20
21	1 2	1	30 1	30 31	29 30	28 29	30	29	29	28	28	27		21
22	2 3	1 2	1 2	31 1	30 31	1	31	30	30	29	29	28		22
23	3 4	2 3	2 3	1 2	31 1	2	1	1	31	30	30	29		23
24	4 5	3 4	3 4	2 3	1 2	3	2	2	1	1	31	30		24
25	5 6	4 5	4 5	3 4	2 3	4	3	3	2	2	1	31		25
26	6 7	5 6	5 6	4 5	3 4	5	4	4	3	3	2	1		26
27	7 8	6 7	6 7	5 6	4 5	6	5	5	4	4	3	2		27
28	8 9	7 8	7 8	6 7	5 6	7	6	6	5	5	4	3		28
29	9 10	8 9	8 9	7 8	6 7	8	7	7	6	6	5	4		29
30	10 11	9 10	9 10	8 9	7 8	9	8	8	7	7	6	5		30

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)[1.]

Thuout (1)

Day	1st	2nd	8th	16th	17th	18th	19th
Vespers							
Psalm	95:1	51:7	104:8	83:4	4:7-9	98:4,8	44:6,17
Gospel	Matt.13: 44 - 52	Matt14: 1 -12	Luke11: 37 - 51	luke 7: 1 -10	John 8: 28 - 42	John 4: 19 -24	Matt 16: 21 - 16
Matins							
Psalm	97:1	91:8	104:12	25:5	59:3	117:27,15	73:2,11
Gospel	Mark 2: 18 -22	Luke 9: 7 - 12	Matt 17: 1 - 9	Luke 19: 1 - 10	John 12: 26 - 36	John 3: 14 - 21	Mark 8: 34 - 9:1
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	1 Cor. 5: 11-6:13	Heb. 11: 320-12:2	Heb. 11: 17-27	Heb. 9: 1-10	1 Cor.1: 17-31	Gal. 6: 11-18	Col. 2: 6-19
Catholic Epistle	1 John 2: 7-17	Jacob 5: 9-20	2 Pet. 1: 19-2:8	1 Pet. 2: 1-10	1 Pet. 2: 1-15	1 Pet. 1: 3-12	1 John 5: 12-20
Acts	17:16-34	12:1-12	15:21-29	9:31-43	10:34-42	4:8-18	3:12-21
Psalm	64:11	91:10,11	98:5,6	64:1,2	64:1,2	144:1,2	6:2,4
Gospel	Luke 4: 14-30	Mark 6: 14-29	Matt. 23: 14-36	Matt. 16: 13-19	John 10: 22-38	John 6: 35-46	Luke 14: 25-35

1. St. Mina Monastery, The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarous] The Weekdays Volume (Netega Daweria tebkan lel-takwem El-Kabty wa el-melady) Egypt: St. Mina Monastery, 1984). All tables taken from this source.

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Thuout (II)

Day	21st	26th
Vespers		
Psalm	63 : 7	9 : 7, 10
Gospel	Mark 4 : 21-25	Mark 14 : 3-9
Matins		
Psalm	69 : 5	101 : 16, 17
Gospel	Mark 3 : 22-27	Mark 12 : 41-44
Liturgy		
Pauline Epistle	Phil. 1: 1-11	Rom. 1 : 1-17
Catholic Epistle	1 John 2 : 7-11	Jacob 1 : 1-18
Acts	19 : 11-17	7 : 2-7
Psalm	15 : 10,11	101 : 11, 14
Gospel	Mark 3 : 28-35	Luke 1 : 1-25

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Paopi

Day	12th	14th	22nd	27th
Vespers				
Psalm	21: 21-22	67: 33,4	104 : 1	111: 1
Gospel	Matt. 9 : 9-13	Luke 10 : 1-20	Luke 9 : 1-6	Matt. 25:14-23
Matins				
Psalm	39 : 8,9	144 : 8,9	67 : 23,25	131 : 1,7
Gospel	Mark 2 : 13-17	John 1 : 44-51	Luke 17 : 5-10	Luke 6 : 17-23
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	Eph. 4 : 11-19	Titus 2 : 11-3:7	Col. 4 : 2-18	Heb. 11 : 17-31
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet. 1 : 3-12	1 John 5 : 5-12	1 Pet.3 :15-22	Jacob 1: 12-21
Acts	5 : 12-18	8 : 26-38	1 : 1-14	19 : 11-20
Psalm	67 : 13	31 : 1,2	95 : 1,2	1: 1,2
Gospel	Luke 5 : 27-32	John 3 : 1-21	Luke 10 : 1-20	Matt. 4 :23-5:16

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)[1]

Athor (I)

Day	8th	9th	12th	15th	17th	22nd	24th
Vespers							
Psalm	67 : 17	32:12,7	148:1,2	67:33,4	131:7,12	4:3,4,7,8,	96:8
Gospel	Mark 8: 34-9:1	Matt. 25: 14-23	Matt. 13: 44-52	Matt. 10: 16-23	Matt.4: 23:5:16	Matt. 10: 24-33	Matt. 11: 25-30
Matins							
Psalm	32:6,9	111:1	103:4,3	96:11	109:5,6,8	112:1	137:1
Gospel	John 12: 26-36	Luke 6: 17-23	Luke 15:3-10	Mark 13:9-13	Luke 6:7-23	Mark 8:34-9:1	Matt. 12:1-8
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Heb. 12: 21-13:2	Room. 4 : 13-5:5	Heb. 1: 1-2:4	Heb. 12: 3~14	2Tim.3: 10-4:22	Room. 8: 14-27	1Tim. 5: 17-6:2
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet.3: 15-22	1 Pet.1: 3-12	Jude 1: 1-13	1 Pet 4: 12-19	1 Pet.5: 1-14	1 Pet.2: 11-17	1 Pet. 5: 1-14
Acts	11:2-14	11:15-24	10:1-20	7:44-8:1	20:17-38	19:11-20	15:6-12
Psalm	79 : 2	18:4, 131:7	102:17	33:18,19	72 :17, 18,21	75 :11,12	131:7,12 13
Gospel	John 1: 43-52	Matt. 16: 13-19	Matt.13: 24-43	Luke 11; 53-12:12	John 10: 1-6	Luke 21: 12-19	John 1: 1-17

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The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Athor (II)

Day	25th	27th	28th	29th
Vespers				
Psalm	17:34,40	45:1,7	88:14,15	88:18,21
Gospel	Matt.8:5-13	Mark 1:16-22	Matt.10:34-42	Luke 9:18-27
Matins				
Psalm	67:33,4	145: 1,4	131:7,12,13	106:23,11
Gospel	Luke 12:4-12	Matt. 4:18-22	Luke 6:17-22	Mark 8:22-29
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	2Cor. 10:1-18	Gal. 1:1-19	Heb.7:18-8:13	Heb.4:14-5:14
Catholic Epistle	1Pet.4:1-11	Jacob 1:1-12	3 John 1-15	1 Pet. 1:1-9
Acts	12:25-13:12	15:13-21	15:36-16;5	12:1-24
Psalm	44:5	77:5,134:5	98:5,6	109:5,6,8
Gospel	Matt. 12:9-23	Mark 10:35-45	John 16:20-33	Matt. 16:13-19

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Khoiak

Day	22nd	28th	29th	30th
Vespers				
Psalm	33: 6,7	49: 2,18	71:8	71: 1
Gospel	Matt.16:24-24	Matt. 1:1-17	Luke 3:23-38	Matt. 12:15-23
Matins				
Psalm	96:8	75:1	71:13	71:9,18
Gospel	Matt. 18:1-20	Matt. 1:18-25	John 1:14-17	Matt. 22:41-46
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	Heb. 2:5-8	Gal. 3:15-4:18	Heb. 1:1-2:4	Gal. 4:19-5:1
Catholic Epistle	1Pet. 1:3-12	1 John 4:1-14	2 Pet. 1:12-17	1 Hohn 4:15-5: 4
Acts	10:21-33	13:13-25	13:26-32	13:36-43
Psalm	137:1	109:3,4	2: 5,6	71:16,17
Gospel	Luke 1:26-38	Luke 2:1-20	Matt. 2:1-12	John 1:1-13

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Tobi (I)

Day	1st	3rd	4th	6th	10th	11th	12th
Vespers							
Psalm	5:10-13	113:17	18:1,4	115:3,4	41:1,6	41:7,12	41:1,7
Gospel	Matt. 10: 24-33	Matt. 18: 1-7	John 15: 7-16	Luke 2: 15-20	Matt. 4: 12-22	Matt. 3: 1-12	Luke 3: 21,22
Matins							
Psalm	33:18,19	118:100,109	44:1,4	65:12,13	41:8,9	28:3,4	33:10,4
Gospel	John 12: 20-26	Matt.18: 10-20	John 1: 1-17	Luke 2: 40-52	John 3: 22-29	Mark 1 : 1-11	Matt. 3: 13-17
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	2Cor. 11: 16-12:12	1 Cor. 13: 11-14:4	Room. 10: 4-18	Phil. 3: 1-12	1 Cor. 1: 1-17	Titus 2: 11-3:7	Eph. 1: 1-14
Catholic Epistle	1Pet. 1: 25-2:10	1 Pet,1: 25-2:10	1 John 1: 1-2:6	2 Pet. 1: 12-21	2 Pet. 1: 12-19	1 John 5: 5-20	1 Pet. 3: 15-22
Acts	6:1-7:2	9:22-30	3:1-16	15:13-21	16:25_21	18:24-19:6	8:26-38
Psalm	20:3,5	112:1	138:15,16	49:12,18	44:3,4	117:25,27	103:1,2
Gospel	Luke 10:1-20	Matt. 2: 13-23	John 21: 15-25	Luke2: 21-39	Luke 3: 1-18	John 1: 18-34	John 1: 35-52

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Tobi (II)

Day	13th	22nd	26th	30th
Vespers				
Psalm	4:8,9	31:12,7, 32:1	31:12,7, 32:1	67:24,25
Gospel	Matt. 10:10-12	Matt. 25:14-23	Matt. 10:34-12	Matt.26:6-13
Matins				
Psalm	103:15,23	32:1,12	32:1,12	8:2,3
Gospel	John 4:43-54	Luke 19:11-19	Luke 6:17-23	John 4:15-24
Liturgy				
Pauline Epistle	Rom. 6:3-16	Phil. 3:20-4:9	Heb. 12:3,4	Eph. 5:8-21
Catholic Epistle	1 John2: 20-25	Jacob 5:9-20	1 Pet. 4:12-19	1 Pet. 3:5-14
Acts	8:3-13	11:19-26	8:3-13	21:5-14
Psalm	76:9,10	33:18, 67:4	33:18,9	44:16
Gospel	John 2:1-11	Luke12:32-44	Matt. 4:23-5:16	Matt. 25:1-13

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Mekher

Day	2nd
Vespers	
Psalm	31:12,7
Gospel	luke 22:24-30
Matins	
Psalm	32:1-12
Gospel	Matt. 25:14-23
Liturgy	
Pauline Epistle	Heb. 13:7-24
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet. 5:1-14
Acts	15:12-21
Psalm	131:7,1
Gospel	Mark 9:33-41

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Baramhat

Day	13th	29th
Vespers		
Psalm	33:18,19	143:5,7
Gospel	Matt. 16:24-28	Luke 7:36-50
Matins		
Psalm	36:34,35	71:5,6
Gospel	Mark 13:9-13	Luke 11:20-28
Liturgy		
Pauline Epistle	2 Cor. 10:1-18	Rom. 3:1-13
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet. 4:1-11	1 John 1:1-2;6
Acts	12:25-13:12	7:23-34
Psalm	96:11	44:13
Gospel	Luke 11:53-12:12	Luke 1:26-38

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Paoni

Day	2nd	16th	30th
Vespers			
Psalm	34:11,19	111:5,2,7	51:7,8
Gospel	Luke 7:18-13	Matt. 24:42-47	Luke 7:28-35
Matins			
Psalm	50: 8,20	91:8,12	91:8,12
Gospel	John 3:25-36	Luke 19:11-19	Matt. 11:11-19
Liturgy			
Pauline Epistle	Heb. 11:1-10	Heb. 11:32-2;2	Heb. 11:32-12:2
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet. 1:25-2:10	Jacob 5:9-20	1 Pet. 2:11-17
Acts	13:25-33	18:24-19:6	7:8-22
Psalm	33:19,14	91:10,11	91:10,11
Gospel	Matt. 11:2-10	Luke 12:32-44	Luke 1:57-80

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Baramudah

Day	23nd	27th	30th
Vespers			
Psalm	33:16,17	4:7,8,9	39:8,3
Gospel	Matt.8:34-9:1	Matt. 16:24-28	Mark 6:6-13
Matins			
Psalm	33:18,19	5:12,13	104:1
Gospel	Mark 8:34-9:1	Matt.10:34-42	Mark 10:17-30
Liturgy			
Pauline Epistle	Rom. 8:28-39	Rom. 8:18-30	2 Tim. 3:10-4:18
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet. 4:1-11	1 Pet. 3:8-15	1 Pet. 5:1-14
Acts	16:16-34	19:23-40	15:36-16:5
Psalm	96:11	67:33,4	95:1
Gospel	Luke 21:12-19	Luke 12:4-12	Mark 1:1-11

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Pakhons

Day	1st	10th	20th	24th	26th
Vespers					
Psalm	86:2,5,7	4:3,4,7,8	64:4,6	104:11,12	67:13,33
Gospel	Luke 10: 38-42	Matt. 11: 25-30	Matt. 24: 42-47	Matt.4: 12-17	Mark 3: 7-21
Matins					
Psalm	47:6,1	112:1	36:15,16,27	105: 14,3	144:8,9
Gospel	Matt. 12: 35-50	Mark 10: 13-16	Mark 13: 33-37	Matt.12: 15-23	Luke 6: 12-23
Liturgy					
Pauline Epistle	Heb. 9:1-12	Heb. 11:32-12:2	1 Cor. 3: 4-23	Eph. 2: 1-22	Rom. 10-4-18
Catholic Epistle	2 John 1: 1-13	1 Pet. 4: 12-19	1 Pet. 5: 5-14	1 John 4: 7-19	2 Pet. 1: 12-21
Acts	1:1-14	19:23-40	18:24-19:6	7:20-34	3:1-16
Psalm	44:14,15	65:11,12	36:28	104:19,21	18:1,4
Gospel	Luke 1: 39-56	Matt. 18: 10-20	Luke 16: 1-12	Matt. 2: 13-23	John 20: 24-31

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Epep

Day	3rd	5th	20th
Vespers			
Psalm	109:5,6,8	67:13,33	17:34,40
Gospel	Matt16:13-19	Mark 3:7-21	Matt.1:16-23
Matins			
Psalm	72:17,18,21	144:8,9	44:5,9
Gospel	John 15:17-25	Luke 6:12-23	Luke 7:11-17
Liturgy			
Pauline Epistle	2 Cor. 4:5-5;11	Rom. 10:4-18	2 Tim. 2:3-15
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet.2:18-3:7	2 Pet. 1:12-21	1 Pet. 3:8-15
Acts	20:17-38	3:1-16	27:42-28:6
Psalm	106:23,31	18:1,4	90:10,9
Gospel	John 10:1-16	Matt. 10:1-15	Luke 10:21-24

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Mesori (I)

Day	3rd	13th	17th	25th	26th	28th	29th
Vespers							
Psalm	39:3	98:5,6	33:18,19	41:1	30:26,19	46:7,8	131:7,12,13
Gospel	Matt. 7: 22-25	Luke 9: 28-36	Mark 1: 16-22	Matt.25: 14-23	Matt. 10: 24-33	John 15: 7-16	Matt. 15: 1-11
Matins							
Psalm	88:16,13	103:29-31	36:34,35	33:4,6	145:10, 11,6,19,20	104:2	109:4,5,7
Gospel	Luke 13: 23-30	Matt. 17: 1-9	Matt.4: 18-22	Luke 19: 11-19	John 12: 20-26	Luke 16: 19-31	Matt. 15: 12-20
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	1 Cor. 3: 1-8	Col. 1: 1-23	Gal. 1: 1-19	Phil.3: 20-4:9	Rom. 8: 14-27	Heb. 11: 1-10	1Cor. 10: 25-11:1
Catholic Epistle	2Pet. 1: 1-11	2Pet. 1: 12-21	Jacob 1: 1-12	Jacob 5: 9-12	1Pet. 2: 11-17	Jacob 2: 14-23	1John 4: 15-21
Acts	15:13-29	7:44-8:1	15:12-21	18:24-19:6	19:11-20	7:20-34	5:34-42
Psalm	60: 1,2	86:1,5	96:11	103:1,2,4	149:5,8	104:4,5	67:19
Gospel	Luke 14: 25-35	Mark 9: 2-13	Mark 10: 35-45	Luke21: 12-19	Luke21: 12-19	Mark 12: 18-27	John 8: 21-27

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Mesori (II)

Day	30th
Vespers	
Psalm	5:10,11,12,13
Gospel	Matt. 14:53-58
Matins	
Psalm	100:10
Gospel	Matt. 14:1-5
Liturgy	
Pauline Epistle	Eph. 4:8-16
Catholic Epistle	2 Pet. 1:19-2:3
Acts	7:30-37
Psalm	49:18,12
Gospel	Luke 14:16-24

The Basic Readings of the Rotating Yearly Lectionary (Weekdays)

Nasie

Day	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	6th
Vespers					
Psalm	64:4,6	18:3,4	33:6,7	67:33,4	118:71,72
Gospel	Matt.10: 34-42	Luke4: 38-41	Matt. 16: 24-28	Matt. 24: 42-47	Luke 13: 10-17
Matins					
Psalm	36:15,16	109:4,5,7	96:8,9	96:11	118:67
Gospel	John 1:1-17	Luke 5: 18-26	Matt. 18: 10-20	Mark 13: 33-37	Luke 4: 23-30
Liturgy					
Pauline Epistle	Rom. 10: 4-18	2Cor. 3: 12-4:4	Heb. 2: 5-18	1Cor. 3: 9-23	Col. 3:8-17
Catholic Epistle	1 John 1:1	1 John 5: 1-10	1 Pet. 1: 3-12	1 Pet. 5: 1-11	Jacob 5: 16-22
Acts	3:1-16	14:1-7	10:21-33	18:24-19:6	11:12-18
Psalm	36:28	104:1,67, 13	137:1,4	115:3	118:73,74
Gospel	John21: 15-25	Luke 6: 12-23	Matt. 25: 31-46	Luke 16: 1-12	John 2: 1-11

III. THE BODY OF THE CHURCH

A. The Mother of God

Her Feasts

Her Birth: First of Pakhons:

Jesus Glorifies Her: Luke 1:39-56. In this Gospel, the Savior glorifies His mother who carried Him in her womb. As Elizabeth greeted her by saying, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear." *The Psalm also says: "All glorious in the Princess within her chamber"* [Psalm 45:12-13]. In his letter, St. Paul speaks about her purity, comparing her to the second dome, that is the most holy place which the high priest enters every year [Heb. 9:1-12][1].

St Mary: Her Birth. The Coptic Church usually celebrates the feasts of the saints to commemorate their falling asleep, their martyrdom or their departure to Paradise; but they are anxious to honor St. Mary on the day of her birth as a day of joy [2].

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1 Banoub Abdou, Kenoz-el-ne'ma, Vol. 1 (Cairo, Egypt: 195 1).

2. Tadros Malaty, St. Mary in the Orthodox Concept (Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic Church, 1978), p. 111.

The Transferred Days:

Tenth of Thuout: The Virgin's birthday **by** Abba Makar Calendar.

Third of Khoiak: St. Mary's presentation in the Temple.

Twenty-first of Tobi: Feast Day of the departure of St. Mary.

Twenty-ninth of Tobi: Feast Day of St. Eksani (this day should be transferred to the thirtieth of Tobi).

Twenty-first of Paoni: Consecration of her first church in Philippi.

Sixteenth of Misra: Feast Day of the Assumption of St. Mary.

Her Commemoration. The Commemoration of St. Mary is on the twenty-first of every Coptic month.

B. The Angels

God created the Angels as ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation [Heb. 1: 14], and their work is to help us [Daniel 10:13], to deliver us from all harm [Genesis 48:16], intercede on behalf of the sinners [Zech. 1:12-13]. They also bring us great news [Mt. 28:2, Luke 1:19-20]. For this reason, the Church reserved special days for their commemoration in order to:

1. Remind the believers of their great services to humanity.

2. To honor them and thank them.

3. To set them as examples for the believers.

The Archangel Michael (twelfth of Athor)

Matthew 13:24-34: This Gospel speaks about the Angels' role at the end of the Age as being the harvesters: "The Son of Man will send out His Angels, and they will weed out of His kingdom every thing that causes sin. They will throw them into the fiery furnace..."

The Psalm says, "Praise the Lord, you His Angles... you His servants who do His will" [Psalm 103:20-21].

In his Epistle, St. Paul explains that God created the Angels as ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation [Heb. 1: 14].

The Transferred Days:

Twelfth of Paoni: Feast Day of Archangel Michael. The Church has arranged a commemoration for him on the twelfth day of each Coptic month.

The Archangel Gabriel (twenty-second of Khoiak)

His Annunciation to St. Mary: Luke 1:26-38: This Gospel speaks about Angel Gabriel's Annunciation to St. Mary about the birth of our Savior.

In his Epistle, St. Paul explains that the Savior took the form of a man and not of an angel.

The Transferred Days:

Thirtieth of Baramhat: Feast Day of Archangel Gabriel.

Twenty-second of Khoiak: Consecration of his church in Caesarea.

The Archangel Raphael (third of Nasie)

The Sheep and the Goats: Matthew 25:13-46. This Gospel speaks about the Angels coming with the Son of Man at the end of the Age, when the sheep will be separated from the goats. The Psalm and the Pauline Epistle are the same as the twenty-second of Khoiak.

The Transferred Days:

Thirteenth of Paoni: Commemoration of Archangel Gabriel.

The Four Incorporated Beasts: (eighth of Athor)

God Accepts Their Intercession: John 1:43-51. As Jesus told Nathnael in this Gospel, "You shall see heaven open and the Angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

In his Epistle, St. Paul refers to their serving God and surrounding His throne.

The Four Incorporated Beasts. The Holy Fathers found close relationships between those four living creatures and the four Evangelists as follows:

St. Matthew: The Human One

St. Mark: The Lion

St. Luke: The Ox

St. John: The Eagle

For this reason, the Evangelists are depicted together with their symbols or with the living creatures. The four Evangelists are the true witnesses and interpreters of life of Christ and His saving deed[1].

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1. Father Tadros Malaty, The Church, House of God (Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic Orthodox Church, 1985), pp. 326

The Twenty-four Priests: John 1: I- 17

In this Gospel, St. John points to the saving grace in those priests "from the fullness of His Grace, we have all received one blessing after another." The Psalm speaks about their white clothes and the golden crowns on their heads. In his Epistle, St. Paul urged the believers to honor the faithful priests.

The Transferred Days:

Ninth of Baramudah, Feast Day of Zossima the monk (this should have been referred to the twenty-second of Tobi pertaining to the monks).

The Commemoration of the Twenty-four Priests:

The Church Fathers prepared a feast day in the commemoration of the twenty-four priests who are a symbol of the priesthood in the Old and New Testaments. They are present around the throne of God to praise Him and intercede on behalf of us.

St. John the Evangelist said about them in the book of Revelation:

> *"Now, when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four priests fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp and golden vials full of incense which are the prayers of the Saints"* [Rev. 5:8][1].

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1. Abdel Messeih El Nekhely, Wodouh El Ro'ia El Samaweya, Sharh wa Tahlil Sefr El Ro'ia (Cairo, Egypt: Dar El Geel Pub., 1978), pp. 161-162.

C. John the Baptist

Annunciation of His Birth (twenty-second of Thuout)

Luke 1:1-25. This Gospel speaks about God's grace for Zechariah and Elizabeth, and that God had heard their prayers and He granted them John.

The Psalm says, "Praise be to the Lord, for He has heard my cry for mercy." In his Epistle, St. Paul wrote, *"On Him we have set our hope, that He will continue to deliver us"* [2 Cor. 1:1-14], which applies to John the Baptist's parents.

The Transferred Days:

Eleventh of Athor: Feast Day of St. Anna, Virgin Mary's mother.

Thirteenth of Khoiak: Commemoration of St. Anna's conception.

Seventh of Mesori: The Angel's good news to Yoachim for the birth of the Virgin Mary.

Sixteenth of Mekher: Feast Day of St. Elizabeth (this day was transferred wrongly to the sixteenth of Thuout, instead of the twenty-sixth of Thuout).

His Birth (Thirtieth of Paoni)

God's Help to John the Baptist: Luke 1:57-80. This Gospel speaks about God's help to John who made "the child grow and become strong in the Spirit."

The Psalm refers to the righteous as being like a palm tree, which flourishes, and to the cedar of Lebanon, which grows [Psalm 92:12-13].

St. Paul's Epistle refers to his patience and his endurance.

The Martyrdom of St. John the Baptist (second of Thuout)

Mark 6:14-29. This Gospel speaks about John the Baptist being guarded by the Savior. Herod feared him, "Knowing him to be a righteous and a holy man."

The Psalm speaks about John the Baptis's growth [Psalm 92:12, 13], and St. Paul's Epistle refers to his endurance [Heb. 11:22-12:2].

The Appearance of His Body (second of Paoni)

The Savior's Testimony to John the Baptist: Matthew 11:2-10. In this Gospel, Jesus testifies that John the Baptist is more than a prophet: "Yes, I tell you, And more than a prophet."

The Psalm refers to God guarding him and the Pauline Epistle refers to his strong faith, which pleased God.

The Transferred Days:

Thirtieth of Mekher: Appearance of John the Baptist's head.

St. John the Baptist:

John the Baptist was one who came before Christ to make the pathway smooth. I believe this is exactly what all of us are called to do now with regard to other people, to make it smooth for them to find their way and to keep helping them to find a straight way to the Lord.

John the Baptist is defined as a voice that shouts in the wilderness to proclaim to people about Jesus Christ. This is what we should learn: when we bring a message, people can perceive us and a message, which perhaps comes through us, because we are not sufficiently identified with what we have got to say. In order to be identified, we must read the Gospel, make it so much ourselves and ourselves so much the Gospel, that when we speak from within it, in its name, it should be simple. Whatever words we use, it should be simply the Gospel that speaks and we should be like a voice--God's voice.

John the Baptist has another quality: remember what he said? "I must decrease in order that You should increase." Our role is to cut straight ways and to make rough ways smooth, but when we have done this, we must step aside and allow the Lord of life for whom we are preparing the way, to come in a Lordly manner, or with the humility of Christ, come with the simplicity of His entry into Jerusalem,

and we must be forgotten, because as long as we loom much, more people will not see Christ.

John the Baptist also said that he is the friend of the bridegroom, the one who so loves the bridegroom that he brings them together. But not to be a part of this meeting, as he remained outside, that is his particular form of love. We must also be like him, to bring Christ to the people as their bridegroom, and we stay on the outside and speak to them the truth, God's own truth, and not our own[1].

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1. Archbishop Anthony Bloom, God and Man (New York: Paulist Press, 197 1), pp. 122-125.

D. The Children of Bethlehem

Their Martyrdom (third of Tobi)

The Gospel speaks about the killing of the 144,000 boys of Bethlehem and Jesus' call out of Egypt to His native land, like the calling of these children to their heavenly home. The Psalms speak about their praise, *"Praise, 0 servants of the Lord, Praise the name of* **the Lord"** [Psalm 113:1].

The Pauline Epistle refers to their martyrdom, which resulted in the building of the Church.

The Children of Bethlehem:

In the second year of Christ's birth, Herod the King killed all the children of Bethlehem who were of two years of age or less according to the time fixed by the Magi, aiming to kill Jesus. The Synaxarium quoted their number as 144,000, and by this, the saying of Jeremiah the Prophet was fulfilled which said: *"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted because they were no more"* [Mt. 2:18].

St. John the Apostle said that no one knows the song of the Four Living creatures and the twenty-four Priests except those children, as they are all virgins and are with God at all

times, and God wipes every tear in their eye. Their intercessions may be with us.[1]

E. The Three Fathers

Commemoration to the Patriarch Fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (twenty-eighth of Mesori).

God's Promise to Them: Mark 12:18-27. This Gospel speaks about God's promise to Abraham and his offspring as Jesus said: *'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, He is not the God of the dead but of the living...*" [Mark 12:27].

The Psalm also refers to this promise and St. Paul in his Epistle speaks about their faith.

The Patriarch Fathers:

Father Abraham became a father of many nations as God said to him, *"By Myself have 1 sworn, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven"* [Gen. 22:16, 17]. This was ascertained as he was called the father of the Christ by flesh [Luke 3:34]. He died at the age of 175 years.

1. The Fathers of the Coptic Church, The Synaxarium (Los Angeles: 1979), pp. 266-267.

Father Isaac was born by a Godly promise and he was perfect in obeying God and his father, Abraham. He was a symbol of Christ as he carried the wood of the burnt sacrifice as Jesus carried His cross. He died at the age of 180 years.

Father Jacob was called Israel, and he was the father of the twelve tribes. He lived for 147 years, and died in Egypt. His relics were transferred to Canaan[1].

F. The prophets and the Righteous:

Feast Day of Moses the Prophet (eighth of Thuout)

God Hears His Request: Matthew 23:14-36. This Gospel speaks about God's acceptance of the requests of the prophets and the righteous which they made through their shed blood; as it is written in the Gospel: "And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berakiah."

The Psalm refers to this, as the Lord was speaking to them by clouds.

In his Epistle, St. Paul urges the believers to endure persecution for their faith, like the prophets and like Moses who preferred humility with God's people rather than enjoying sin [2].

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1. The Fathers of the Coptic Church. The Synaxarium (Cairo, Egypt: Coptic Orthodox Patriarchy, 1968), pp. 440-442.

2. Banoub abdou

Moses the Prophet:

Born in Egypt about 1350 B.C. at a time when the Jews were under severe oppression and slavery. Moses was a man of vision and imagination, of strength and endurance and of charisma and virtue. His destiny, planned by God, was to lead the people of Israel out of bondage i.e. out of Egypt. He submitted himself to God's calling. He was a man who prayed and listened to the divine answer. He was a great leader, taking command in a time of crisis, creating a nation and reversing the course of history. His life, works and deeds were recorded in the first five books of the Old Testarnent[1].

The Transferred Days:

Fourth of Thuout: Joshua son of Nun
Sixth of Thuout: Isaiah
Twenty-fifth of Thuout: Jonah
Twenty-first of Paopi: Joel
Fifth of Khoiak: Nahum
Twentieth of Khoiak: Haggai
Twenty-third of Khoiak: Daniel
Fifteenth of Tobi: Obadaiah
Twenty-sixth of Mekher: Hosea
Twenty-third of Baramhat: Daniel
Fifth of Baramuda: Ezekiel
Seventh of Baramuda: Yoachim the Righteous

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1. George Mastrantions, Moses and the Pentateuch (St. Louis: LOGOS PUBLICATIONS), PP. 2,3.

Fifth of Pakhons: Jeremiah
Ninth of Paoni: Samuel
Twentieth of Paoni: Elijah
Twenty-sixth of Paoni: Joshu
Twenty-sixth of Epep: Jospeh the Carpenter
Fourth of Mesori: Hezekial the King
Twenty-second of Mesori: Micah

Feast Day of the Prophet Malachi (thirtieth of Mesori)

God's Calling to the Poor Through Him: Luke 14:16-24. This Gospel speaks about Jesus' call to the poor through His prophets, like the owner of the house who ordered his servants to go out and bring in the poor after his guests refused the invitation. Malachi is compared to the servant, since he was the last of the prophets in the Old Testament.

In his Epistle, St. Paul refers to the work of the prophets in establishing the church (Eph. 4:8-16).

Malachi:

One of the twelve little prophets, he prophesied about the return of the people from the capture of Jerusalem, and he rebuked the sons of Israel for their disobedience to God and His Laws, and for not giving the ten percent and the beginnings of their fruits. He said, *"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meal in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out*

a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it' [Malachi 3:19].

He also prophesied about the coming of John the Baptist [Malachi 3: 1], and the coming of Ilias in front of Jesus in his Second Coming [Malachi 4:5, 6]. After he pleased God by his good manner, he died in peace[1].

G. The Missionaries

The Twelve Disciples

The Martyrdom of St Peter and St Paul (fifth of Epep)

Preaching His Word: Matthew 10:1-15. This Gospel speaks about the disciples preaching the gospel, which the Savior has called the "Kingdom of Heaven," as Jesus told them *"As you go, preach this message: 7he Kingdom of Heaven is near.' " The Psalm also refers to the same meaning: "Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the end of the world"* [Psalm 19:1,4].

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about their preaching which is essential to spread the faith: *"How can they hear without someone preaching to them?*" [Romans 10:4-18][2].

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1. The Fathers of the Coptic Orthodox Church, The Synaxarium, VoL 2 (Cairo. Egypt: The Fathers of the Coptic Orthodox Church, 1968), p. 445.

2. Banoub Abdou.

St. Peter

Son of Jonas, native of Bethsaida, he was a fisherman and a brother of Andrew. He denied Jesus just before crucifixion, but repented and Jesus accepted him. On the first day of Pentecost, 3,000 souls were saved by his preaching. He preached mainly in Judea and wrote two Epistles.

When the Roman Emperor, Nero, ordered him to be killed, he fled on the advice of the faithfuls and met Jesus on the way, which told him that He is going to be crucified instead of him. Peter immediately returned to Rome and asked to be crucified upside down, in 64 A.D[1].

The Transferred Days:

Eighteenth of Athor: Philip the Apostle
Fourth of Koiak: Andrew the Apostle
Twenty-first of Khoiak: Bamabas the Apostle
Tenth of Mekher: James Son of Alpheus
Twenty-first of Mekher: Ansimus (St. Paul's student)
Eighth of Baramhat: St. Matthias the Apostle
Seventeenth of Baramudah: James Son of Zebedee
Eighteenth of Epep: St. James the Righteous
Twenty-ninth of Epep: Transference of the Relics of St. Andrew the Apostle.

1. Sami R. Hanna, The Chosen Twelve, ed. Peter Brownsfield (United States: 1983), pp. 20-26.

Martyrdom of St Thomas the Apostle (twenty-sixth of Pakhons)

His Belief in the Savior's Divinity: John 20:24-31. In this "Gospel, St. Thomas believed in Jesus' Divinity and said: 'My Lord and my God." The Psalm refers to his preaching the Gospel, and St. Paul, in his Epistle, speaks about the**,** grace in believing Jesus Christ[1]

St. Thomas

St. Thomas was born in Galilee. He did not believe in Jesus' Resurrection, except after he actually touched Jesus' wounds with his hand.

He preached in Persia, sold himself into slavery to an Indian merchant who offered him to the King of India, who loved him for his purity. He gave him money to build a castle, but St. Thomas distributed it to the poor. When the king knew this, he released him and allowed him to preach the Gospel. The Hindus became jealous and killed him with a spear[2].

Feast Day of St. Titus the Apostle (second of Nasie)

The Savior's Reward to Him: Luke 6:12-23. This Gospel speaks about the Savior's reward to His Apostles and missionaries "Because great is your reward in heaven."

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1. Banoub Abdou.

2. Sami R. Hanna, pp. 39-43.

The Psalm also speaks about the power of those who proclaim His Word, *"The Lord announced the Word, and great was the company of those who proclaimed it'* [Psalm 68:11]. In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about their declaration of the faith publicly [2 Cor. 3:12-3:4].

Titus

A convert from heathenism by St. Paul, we first heard about him when he accompanied St. Paul on his journey from Antioch to Jerusalem and he continued to be one of his missionary companions and assistants. Titus and Timothy share the horror of being the most trusted and efficient assistants of St. Paul[1].

The Seventy Apostles

Feast Day of St Stephen, the Archdeacon (first of Tobi)

His Salvation: Luke 10:1-21. This Gospel speaks about Jesus' salvation to His Apostles, especially St. Stephen, the fist martyr, and one of the Seventy Apostles. In this Gospel Jesus told them, "But rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

1. Janies Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Chadeg Scribner's Sons, 1963), pp. 1005, 1006).

The Psalm refers to the great glory that Stephen received by his martyrdom. In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the hardship faced by those who preach the Word of God[1].

St Stephen, the Archdeacon and the First Martyr

The Apostles chose seven deacons to serve the poor. One of them was Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. He dealt with some synagogues, and one of them accused him, saying that he said that the Christ of Nazareth would destroy the Temple [Acts 6:14]. He was called to the court where he defended himself by the greatest elaborate address in the Acts [Acts 7].

The court became indignant over Stephen's indictment of the Jews and hatred drove it to disregard all rules of order, allowing the people to drag him out of court and stone him to death [Acts 7:55-60] [2].

The Transferred Days:

Fifteenth of Thuout: The transference of St. Stephen's relics.

Twenty-fourth of Thuout: Feast Day of St. Kodratos the Apostle.

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1. Banoub Abdou.

2. George Masterantonis, Introducdon to the Acts of the Apostles (St. Louis: LOGOS Publications), p. 7.

Twenty-sixth of Paopi: Feast Day of the Martyr St. Titnon, the Apostle and one of the seven deacons.

Twentieth of Tobi: Feast Day of St. Prochoros, the Apostle and one of the seven deacons.

Nineteenth of Baramhat: Feast Day of St. Aristobulos, the Apostle and one of the seven deacons.

Fifteenth of Baramudah: Consecration of the Church of St. Aghabos.

Twenty-ninth of Baramudah: Feast Day of St. Aristos.

Third of Pakhons: Feast Day of St. Yasoun.

Twenty-second of Pakhons: Feast Day of St. Andrewnekus the Apostle.

First of Paoni: Feast Day of St. Karbos.

Twenty-first of Paoni: Feast Day of Jude the Apostle.

Sixth of Epep: Feast Day of Olempas the Apostle.

Feast Day of St. Philip (one of the Seven Deacons and one of the Seventy Apostles) (fourteenth of Paopi)

The Baptism of Salvation: John 3:1-21. This Gospel speaks about the Savior's baptism for salvation. In this Gospel, Jesus told Nicodemus, "I tell you the truth, unless a

man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God."

The Psalm refers to the purification through baptism: *"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven..."* [Psalm 32:1, 2].

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the grace of God that brings salvation, and God saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit [Titus 2:1 1 3:7].

The Transferred Days:

Twenty-fifth of Baramhat: Feast Day of Freska (Omsephoros).

St. Philip

He was one of the seventy Apostles chosen by Christ, and then the disciples chose him as one of the seven Deacons. He preached in the city of Samera and baptized many believers, one of them being Simon the magician, who tried to buy the gifts of the Holy Spirit with money. He also baptized the Ethiopian eunuch; then the angel of God snatched him to Ashdoud where he preached[1]

1. Fr. Mikhail and Fr. Philmaous, El Makary, Ketab El Sadek El Amin, VoL 1 (Cairo, Egypt: El Tawfik Publishing. 1913), pp. 96-97.

The Evangelists

Martyrdom of St Matthew the Evangelist (twelfth of Paopi)

The Savior's Call to Him: Luke 5:27-32. This Gospel speaks about Jesus calling the sinners, as Jesus said after calling Levi, the tax collector, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The Psalm refers to the power that God gives to those who preach Its Word. In his Epistle, St. Paul explains the purpose of the preaching, and that the believers should not behave according to their own thinking[1]

St. Matthew

He was born in Cana of Galilee, and was a publican when Jesus called him to be one of His disciples. He wrote his Gospel.

After the Ascension, he remained in Jerusalem for fifteen years. Then he preached in Judea, Kosh, and Persia. He succeeded in making the princess of Ethiopia a Christian when her father died. Her uncle tried to marry her to be the king, but she refused. He ordered St. Matthew to change her mind, but when he refused, the king ordered his soldiers to beat him to death[2]

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1. Banoub Abdou.

2. Sami R. Hanna, The Chosen Twelve, pp. 44-48.

The Transferred Days:

Fifteenth of Pakhons: Martyrdom of St. Simon the Jealous.

Martyrdom of St Mark the Evangelist (thirtieth of Baramudah)

Preaching Jesus' Baptism: Mark 1:1-11. St. Mark started his preaching by Jesus' Baptism, the one that John the Baptist said about "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Psalm speaks about the preaching from day-to-day of His salvation. In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the efforts of St. Mark in his ministry.

St. Mark

He was born in Cyrene, one of the five cities of Lybia. His father was the cousin of St. Peter. His house in Jerusalem was the site where Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and gave them His body and His blood. He was one of the seventy Apostles. He accompanied St. Peter in Judea, and then St. Paul. but his main preaching was in Africa as he established the Church of Alexandria and preached in Pentapolis.

On Easter day of the year 68 A.D., he was arrested by the pagan mob of Alexandria, dragged in the streets for two successive days, until he received the crown of Martyrdom.

At present, the Coptic Church is presided over by His Holiness, Pope Shenouda III, the 117th successor of St. Mark [1].

The Transferred Days:

Twentieth of Athor: Feast Day of Anianous, the 2nd Pope.

Twenty-third of Pakhons: Feast Day of Yonias.

Twenty-seventh of Paoni: Feast Day of St. Ananias the Martyr.

Second of Epep: Feast Day of Thaddeus, the Apostle.

Ninth of Epep: Feast Day of the Martyr St. Simon Clopes, the Apostle[2]

Martyrdom of St. Luke the Evangelist (twenty-second of Paopi)

Luke 10:1-20. This Gospel speaks about the power that the Savior gave to His Apostles to trample on serpents and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy. The Psalm refers to the same meaning.

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1. Mikhail E. Mikhail, The Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt (Egypt: 198 1), pp. 1. 2.

2. A Monk of The Eastern aurch, The Year of Grace of the Lord (Crestwood. New York: St. Bvladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), p.

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the ministry and the need for prayers for its success.

The Transferred Days:

Eighteenth of Khoiak: Transference of the relics of the martyr St. Titus (Yostos)

Fourth of Mekher: Feast Day of the Martyr St. Agabos the Apostle.

St Luke the Evangelist

He wrote the third Gospel and the Acts. He was the fellow of St. Paul in his travels, preaching and sufferings. The tradition told us that he lived 84 years, and he died by being crucified in Greece. St. Gerome told us that his relics were transferred with the relics of St. Andrew from Tebra of Akhaeia to the Church of the Apostles in Constantinopolis.

St. Luke depended, in writing his Gospel, on revised, well-settled documents and what he heard from the stable oral tradition, especially from the Virgin St. Mary. Before believing in Christ, he practised medicine as St. Paul said about him in his Epistle to Colossae, *"Luke, the physician'* [Col. 4:14]. So, he spoke about Jesus as the Physician of Humanity, and Savior of the World. Also, he was an artist, and he drew the first picture of St. Mary[1]

1. Anba Youanes, Bishop of El Gharbeiah, Bakat Atera men seyar El Abrarwal Keddisin (Egypt: Coptic Orthodox Diocese of El Gharbeiab, 1985). pp. 72-76.

Feast Day of St John the Evangelist (fourth of Tobi)

Jesus' Praise of St John: John 21:15-25. In this Gospel, Jesus praised St. John as he said to Peter, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?' The Psalm also refers to Jesus' favor for St. John.

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the preaching of the Word of God and the belief in it.

St John

He was a native of Bethsaida, the younger of two sons of Zebedee and Salome. Jesus called him "Boanerges"-son of thunder-for his high rank, voice, and glorious teachings. In Hebrew, John means God is gracious. He was a fisherman, a disciple of St. John the Baptist. Then he joined Jesus. He was the first to go to the tomb--with Peter--to prove Jesus' Resurrection. He was a witness of many great miracles done by Jesus, and Jesus loved him most. He wrote one Gospel, three Epistles, and the book of Revelation. He died peacefully in Ephesus[1].

The Transferred Days:

Twenty-fourth of Khoiak: Feast Day of the martyr St. Ignatius of Antioch (student of St. John the Evangelist).

Twenty-ninth of Mekher: Feast Day of the martyr St. Polycarp (student of St. John the Evangelist and Bishop of Smyrna).

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1. Sami R. Hanna, The Chosen Twelve, pp. 14-19.

Sixteenth of Bararnudah: Feast Day of the martyr Antibas (student of St. John the Evangelist).

Sixteenth of Pakhons: Feast Day of St. John the Evangelist.

Sixteenth of Epep: Feast Day of St. John, The owner of the golden gospel.

First of Nasie: Feast Day of St. Aphtikous (student Of St. John the Evangelist)[3].

H. The Martyrs

Feast Day of St. George the Roman (twenty-third of Baramudah)

Luke 21:12-19. This Gospel speaks about those martyrs who were persecuted on account ,) of His name, "For 1 will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or conflict."

The Psalm refers to the strength that the Savior gives them. In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the failure of the persecution to turn them away from Jesus.

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1. A Monk of the Eestern Church, The Year of Grace of the Lord

The Transferred Days:

Seventh of Athor: Consecration of St. George's Church in El-Led

Sixth of Pakhons: Martyrdom of Isaac El-Defrawy

Eighth of Pakhons: Martyrdom of Yehnes El-Senhouty

Seventh of Paoni: Martyrdom of Abaskhiron El-Kelliny

Nineteenth of Paoni: Martyrdom of George El Mosahem

Twenty-seventh of Epep: Martyrdom of Abamoun

Twenty-third of Mesori: Martyrdom of 30,000 in Alexandria and Feast of St. George at Damsis

Twenty-seventh of Mesori: Martyrdom of Benjamin and his sister.

St. George

He was born in Cappadocia, and his father, Anastasius, was the governor of Melitine in Cappadocia. He joined the Army, and after the Emperor Diocetian ordered people to profess paganism, he refused to worship the idols, and proclaimed himself a Christian. The Governor tortured him for seven years with all kinds of tortures. Finally, they cut

off his head and he gained the crown of martyrdom in 307 A.D. [1]

The Martyrs of the Eastern Church

Martyrdom of Prince Tadros El-Shatby (twentieth of Epep)

Luke.10:21-24. This Gospel speaks about Jesus revealing to them the preaching of His Gospel and His thanks to His Father, because "You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children."

The Psalm speaks about God's preservation from all dangers [Psalm 91:11, 13]. In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about their sufferings as Jesus' soldiers [2 Tim. 2:3-15].

Anba Tadros El-Shatby

He was called El Shatby because he was born in a village called "Taboor" of a district called "Shatb" in Assiut. His father was in the army, and was sent to Antioch where he married a daughter of one of the princes, and bore this saint. When he grew up, he joined the army and reached a high rank. When Likinius Caesar began the persecution of the Christians, he confessed his Christianity, so the ruler ordered him to be burnt alive. He was martyred in 320 A.D. Many churches were built in his name.

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1. The Fathers of the Coptic Orthodox church. The Synaxarium, (Cairo, Egypt: *The* Fathers of the Coptic Orthodox Church, 1968), pp. 175-178.

The Transferred Days:

Fifteenth of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Bandiaemon, the Physician from Nicomedia

Nineteenth of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Maophilis and his wife from Fayoum

Twenty-fifth of Mekher: Martyrdom of St. Archiplus, Philemon and Apphia

Twenty-eighth of Mekher: Martyrdom of St. Theordorus the Roman from Astir

Eighteenth of Baramhat: Martyrdom of Isosorus

Second of Baramudah: Martyrdom of Christophorus

Twentieth of Barwnudah: Martyrdom of Bebnouda from Dandam

Twenty-fourth of Baramudah: Martyrdom of Sena, the companion of Isosorus

Twenty-sixth of Bammudah: Martyrdom of Sosnious

Sixth of Paoni: Martyrdom of St. Theodorus the Monk[1].

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1. Anba Mettaos, Robaneiet El Tasbeha (Egypt: Diocese of Beny Suief, 1980), p. 212.

The Martyrs of the Universal Church

Feast Day of the Martyr St. Markorius, owner of the two swords (twenty-fifth of Athor)

Matthew 12:9.23. In this Gospel, Jesus speaks about His chosen servant, "A bruised reed He will not break and a smoking wick He will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory." And the Psalm refers to His victory: *"Gird Your sword upon Your side, 0 mighty one; clothe Yourself with splendor and majesty* " [Psalm 45:3, 4].

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the spiritual weapons by which the martyrs are equipped and its ability to demolish strongholds [2 Cor. 10: 1- 18].

St. Mercurius

One of the most popular saints of the soldiers in the Coptic Calendar. His birth name was Philopatir, and when he grew up, he was enlisted in the army under the name of Mercurius, and served in the regiment known as the Masturian Band. One day, while he was in active service, a tall man in rich apparel appeared in the tent of Mercurius and told him that he would have a victory, and when this occurred, he should not forget God. Then he gave him a sword. Next day, he gained a great victory, so his leader appointed him as commander of his forces. Out of jealousy, someone slandered him to Decius the leader, saying that he had boasted of being a servant of Christ rather than the Emperor. Decius asked Mercurius to sacrifice to Artemis, but he refused, and declared that he was a Christian. Decius

was astonished, and promised him wealth and high rank if he would retract his words, but Mercurius refused. So, the Emperor had him racked, had hot ashes piled on him and sent him to prison where Christ appeared to him comforted him and healed his wounds.

Next day he appeared before Decius free of all wounds. The Emperor was greatly surprised, and he had him tortured with red hot irons, hung him head downwards with a heavy stone suspended from his neck, beat him and finally, he had him beheaded[1].

The Transferred Days:

Eight of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Matre

Twenty-eighth of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Markianus and Markorius

Fifth of Tobi: Martyrdom of St. Osaginus the Soldier

Twenty-eighth of Baramudah: Martyrdom of St. Milios the Hermit

Twenty-fifth of Pakhons: Martyrdom of St. Kolts El-Ensenawy

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1. DeLacy O'Leary The Saints of Egypt (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937), pp. 201-202.

Twenty-fifth of Epep: Consecration of Abbu-Sefein Church

The Martyrs of the Coptic Church

Martyrdom of St Mena, the Miracle Worker (fifteenth of Athor)

Luke 11:53-12-12. In this Gospel, Jesus encourages and supports His martyrs: "I tell you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more."

The Psalm refers to the sorrows of the upright, but God saves them. In His Epistle, St. Paul speaks about God's discipline of His children, and for those who exercise it, their fruit will be the grace of peace.

St. Mena

Born in 285 A.D. after long prayers and fasting from his parents. He was raised in a very religious family. His father died when he was eleven years old, and three years later his mother died. At the age of fifteen, he joined the army, where he set a good example of humility, spirituality, and mercy among his comrades. He stayed in the army for three years at the end of which the Emperors Diocletian and Maximilian issued their famous decree against the Christians and ordered all people to worship the Roman gods, Apollo and Artemis.

St. Mena decided to leave the army for the desert, and after spending five years living with God in continuous

prayers and fasting and contemplation, St. Mena saw a revelation. The sky opened up and the angels and saints floated around him. Then came the voice telling him that God had well-rewarded him with three crowns: for his celibacy, solitude and martyrdom. St. Mena went back and declared his faith in Jesus Christ, and after trial and torture, they cut his head off in 309 A.D[1].

The Transferred Days:

Twenty-seventh of Thuout: Martyrdom of St. Astasius and two sons

Twenty-eighth of Tobi: Martyrdom of Abba Caou the Monk from Bemouih

Sixth of Mekher: Martyrdom of Abakir, Yohanna and 3 Virgins

Fourth of Paoni: Martyrdom of Shenousi from Balkim, Egypt

Fifteenth of Paoni: Consecration of St. Merds Church

Fourth of Epep: Transfer of the relics of St. Abakir and St. Youhanna

Twelfth of Epep: Martyrdom of Abahor El Seriacousy

Twenty-fourth of Epep: Martyrdom of Abanoub El Nehisy

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1. The Fathers of the Coptic Orthodox church. The Synaxarium, (Cairo, Egypt: El Mahaba Library, 1974), pp. 149-153.

First of Mesori: Martyrdom of Abaly from the city of Basta

Ninth of Mesori: Martyrdom of Ory El-Shatanoufy.

The Forty Martyrs of Sabesta (thirteenth of Baramhat)

God's Support to Them: Luke 11:53-12:12. This Gospel speaks about the Savior's support with knowledge through the Holy Spirit: "Do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say." The Psalm and Pauline Epistle are referring to the same meaning.

The Forty-nine Martyrs, Elders of Shiheet

They were killed by the Barbar in one of their attacks of the monasteries, and with them was the apostle of Theodosious the Young, and his son, Zios. Zios saw the angels descending from the sky and putting crowns on the heads of these martyrs, so he grasped his father and rushed towards the Barbar who killed them. The monks put their bodies in a church consecrated by Pope Theodosius the First in 528 A.D.

Pope Benjamin the First the 38th reshrouded and reburied them. When their church began to break, Ibrahim El Gohary built for them another church in 1782 A.D., in which

their bodies remain until now. It is in the Monastery of Saint Macari, and is called "The Church of the Elders."[1].

The Transferred Days:

Fourth of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Wachus

Tenth of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Sergius, the companion of Wachus

Nineteenth of Athor: Consecration of the Church of St Sergious and Wachus

Eighth of Khoiak: Martyrdom of Essy, his sister Tekla and Saint Barbara.

Twenty-first of Epep: Martyrdom of Sosnious El Khessy[1]

Martyrdom of Assemblies of the Church

Martyrdom of SS. Cosman, Demian, their brothers and mother (twenty-second of Athor)

Luke 21:12-19. This Gospel speaks about God's protection for those who preach His Word: "But not a hair of your head will perish."

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1. Anba mettaos, Rohaniat El Tasbeha (Egypt: Diocese of Beny Sweif, 1980, pp. 266

The Psalm speaks about saving from fire and water, and leading them to rest. In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about their hope by sacrificing their bodies.

SS. Cosman, Demian, their Brothers and Mother

Their mother became a widow while they were young. She was merciful and loved foreigners. She raised her children in the fear of God. As for Cosrnan and Demian, they worked as physicians and treated the patients for free. Their brothers went to the desert and became monks.

When the Emperor Diocletian denied Jesus and gave orders to worship the idols, Cosman and Demian wandered in many cities preaching the word of Christ. So, Diocletian ordered the ruler of the city to torture them. The ruler brought both of them and their mother and brothers and tortured them, but they refused to deny their faith, and their mother, Thaothoui, was strengthening them. At last, the ruler cut their heads off and they took the crown of life[1].

The Transferred Days:

Twenty-eighth of Thuout: Martyrdom of SS. Abadeer and his sister Iraie

Twenty-sixth of Athor: Martyrdom of St. Blarianos and his brother

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1. The Fathers of the Coptic Church, The Coptic Synaxarium (Los Angeles, 1980), pp. 166-167.

Nineteenth of Tobi: Discovery of the relics of SS. Abahour, Missoura, and their mother, Ampera

First of Baramhat: Martyrdom of SS. Marcurius and Tekla

Seventh of Baramhat: Martyrdom of St. Philernon and his friend Apollonius

Fourth of Baramudah: Martyrdom of SS. Boctor, Dacious and others

Thirteenth of Baramudah: Martyrdom of Abba Joshua and Abba Joseph

Tenth of Paoni: Martyrdom of St. Dabamoun and St. Lology

Twenty-second of Paoni: Consecration of the Church of S.S. Cosma and Dernian

Nineteenth of Epep: Martyrdom of St. Batlan and others

Thirtieth of Epep: Martyrdom of St. Markorios and his relatives

Twentieth of Mesori: Martyrdom of the seven Youngsters of Ephesus

Twenty-sixth of Mesori: Martyrdom of St. Moisis and his sister.

The Mangled Martyrs

Feast Day of the Martyr St. Jacob the Mangled (twenty-seventh of Athor)

The Greatness In Ministry: Mark 10:35-45. In this Gospel, Jesus speaks about who is the greatest in his work: "Whoever wants to become great among you, must be your servant."

The Psalm speaks about God's glory, and the Epistle of St. Paul speaks about the martyrs not turning away from Jesus despite their tortures.

St Jacob the Mangled

He was a soldier, in the army of Secradin Dafour, the King of Persia, and he was a Christian. The King succeeded to make him to worship the idols, but his mother, wife, and sister rebuked him saying, "Why did you deny the Christ and worship the created objects, the fire and the sun? If you persist on this, we will depart from you." When he read their message, he wept repented, and returned to Jesus Christ, and so left the service of the King. The King brought him and ordered his soldiers to cut his body into pieces, so they cut piece by piece until he died and took the crown of martyrdom.

The Transferred Days:

Twenty-ninth of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Demetrios

Fifth of Athor: Appearance of St. Langino's head

Sixteenth of Khoiak: Consecration of the Church of St. Jacob the mangled

Sixth of Baramhat: Martyrdom of St. Discoros

Twenty-third of Epep: Martyrdom of St. Langinos

Tenth of Mesori: Martyrdom of St. Bikhibous

Seventeenth of Mesori: Martyrdom of St. Jacob the Soldier[1]

The Confessors

Martyrdom of St. Boctor, Son of Romanos (twenty-seventh of Baramudah)

The Savior Acknowledges Him: Luke 12:4-12. In this Gospel, Jesus speaks about those who acknowledge Him. "I tell you, whoever acknowledges Me before men, the Son of man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God."

The Psalm speaks about their joy, and in his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about their glory.

His father, Romanos, was the minister of the king, Diocletian, and he was an idol worshipper. As for St.

1. The Fathers of the Coptic Church, The Synaxarium (Los Angeles: 1980), pp. 174-176.

Boctor, he was grown up as a good Christian by his mother. He persevered in his prayers and fasting, and he rebuked his father for worshipping idols. His father brought him in front of the king and ordered him to worship the idols, but he refused, so the King sent him to the Ruler of Alexandria, who severely tortured him, and last, cut his head off, and so he took the crown of the Kingdom of Heaven [1].

The Transferred Days:

Eleventh of Thuout: Martyrdom of St. Waceledus

Twenty-second of Thuout: Martyrdom of SS. Koptias and Aksowa

Fourteenth of Khoiak: Martyrdom of Behnam and his sister Sarah

Sixteenth of Tobi: Martyrdom of St. Philothaos

Twenty-seventh of Tobi: Martyrdom of Abba Fam the soldier

Thirteenth of Mekher: Martyrdom of St. Sergius El-Atribi

Seventeenth of Mekher: Martyrdom of St. Mina the monk

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1. The Fathers of the Coptic Church, The Synaxasium Vol. 2 (Coptic Orthodox Patdarchy, 1968), pp. 143 -144.

Twenty-third of Mekher: Martyrdom of St. Osadious son of Wasilidis

Eighteenth of Baramudah: Martyrdom of St. Arsanius

First of Paoni: Martyrdom of St. Akladios son of Abtalmaous

First of Epep: Martyrdom of St. John and his cousin Simon

Twenty-second of Epep: Martyrdom of Makarios, son of Wasilidis

The Three Young Men

Feast Day of Hanania, Ezariah and Misaeil (tenth of Pakhons)

Matthew 18:10-20. This Gospel speaks about God's saving them: "Your father in heaven is not willing that any of those little ones should be lost."

The Psalm refers to their protection from fire and water, and St. Paul speaks about their rewards.

Hanania, Ezaria and Misaeil

These are the three young men who were captured to Babylon. There, they were called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. When they refused to worship the idol, Nebuchadnezzar ordered them to be thrown into a fiery

furnace, which was heated seven times. But God descended among them and the fire became like the dew, as it was written in the Complement of the Book of Daniel, "He saved us from the hell, and the hands of death and delivered us from the furnace of burning flame and from the middle of the fire" (Complement of Daniel, 3:88)[1].

The Transferred Days:

Eighth of Mesori: Martyrdom of SS. Lazarius, Salomi, and their children.

Sixteenth of Paopi: Feast Day of Anba Agathu the 39th

Eighteenth of Paopi: Feast Day of Anba Thaophilis the 23rd

Second of Athor: Feast Day of Anba Peter the 27th

First of Mekher: Feast Day of Anba John the 94th

Twentieth of Mekher: Feast Day of Peter the 21st

Twelfth of Baramhat: Delibate Day of Dimitrios the 12th

Sixteenth of Baramhat: Feast Day of Anba Khail the 56th

Twenty-fourth of Baramhat: Feast Day of Anba Makarios the 59th

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1. Anba Mettaos, Rohaniat El Tasbeha, p. 1.50.

Fourteenth of Baramudah: Feast Day of Anba Maximos the 15th

Twenty-second of Baramudah: Feast Day of Anba Alexandros the 19th

Fourth of Pakhons: Feast Day of Anba John the 29th

Eighteenth of Paoni: Feast Day of Anba Damianos the 35th.

I. The Fathers of the Universal Church

Feast Day of St. John Chrysostom (seventeenth of Athor)

John 10:1-16. This Gospel speaks about God's care for him: "I am the good shepherd. I know My sheep and My sheep know Me."

The Psalm refers to the same meaning. In his Epistle to Timothy, St. Paul advises him to preach the word and to continue to do so at all times.[1]

St. John Chrysostom

He was one of the greatest writers of Christendom and one of the most eminent preachers and interpreters of the Word of God. The Church called him "the goldenmouthed" because he was one of the greatest Christian expositors of the Bible.

He was born to a noble family in Antioch in 345 A.D. and was well-educated in law and theology. He was ordained as Bishop and Patriarch of Constantinopolis in 398 A.D. He served the Lord until his death in 407 A.D.

His writings have been of the most read books throughout the centuries. They total 1,917 complete or partial manuscripts[2].

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1. Banoub Abdou.
2. George Masterantonit. The Life of St. John Chrysostom (St Louis: LOGOS P'ublications), pp. 2-1 1.

The Transferred Days:

Thirteenth of Thuout: Commemoration of the miracle of St. Basilius, Bishop of Kabodokia.

Thirtieth of Thuout: Commemoration of the miracle of St. Athanasius

Third of Paopi: Feast Day of Pope Simon II the 51 st

Fifth Day of Paopi: Martyrdom of St. Paul, Patriarch of Constantinople

Ninth Day of Paopi: Feast Day of Pope Omanius, the 7th

Sixth of Athor: Feast Day of Pope Felix of Rome

Twenty-first of Athor: Feast Day of St. Gregory, the miracle performer

First of Khoiak: Feast Day of St. Peter El-Rahawy, Bishop of Gazah

Fifteenth of Khoiak: Feast Day of St. Gregory of Arminia

Seventh of Tobi: Feast Day of St. Silvester, Pope of Rome

Fourteenth of Mekher: Feast Day of St. Severus of Antioch

Eighteenth of Mekher: Feast day of St. Melatius of Antioch

Twenty-seventh of Mckher: Feast Day of St. Ostasius of Antioch

Tenth of Baramhat: Feast Day of the Appearance of the Cross

Twelfth of Pakhons: Transfer of the relics of John Chrysostom

Twenty-eighth of Pakhons: Transfer of the body of Epiphanius

Fourteenth of Mesori: Commemoration of the miracle at the time of Pope Theophilous the 23rd

The Patriarchs of the Eastern Church

Feast Day of St. Cyril the Great, the 24th (third of Epep)

John 10:1-16. This Gospel speaks about Jesus laying down His life for His sheep. "The **good** shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the difficulties that the shepherd encounters.

The Transferred Days:

Third of Thuout: Feast Day of Anba Dionassios, the 14th

Seventh of 'Muout: Feast Day of Anba Discoros, the 25th

Second of Paopi: Escape of Anba Severous of Antioch, to Egypt

Eleventh of Paopi: Feast Day of Anba Jacob of Antioch

Seventeenth of Paopi: Feast Day of Anba Discoros, the 31st

First of Athor: Martyrdom of Keriakos, Bishop of Jerusalem

Thirteenth of Athor: Feast Day of Anba Zakharias, the 64th

Thirtieth of Athor: Feast Day of Anba Akakios of Constantinople

Sixth of Khoiak: Feast Day of Anba Abram, the 62nd

Second of Tobi: Feast Day of Anba Thonas, the 16th

Eighth of Tobi: Feast Day of Anba Benjamin, the 38th

Seventh of Mekher: Feast Day of Anba Alexandrus, the 43rd

Twenty-second of Baramhat: Feast Day of Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem

Third of Baramudah: Feast Day of Anba Mikhail, the 71st

Twelfth of Baramudah: Feast Day of Anba Alexandrus, Bishop of Jerusalem

Seventh of Pakhons: Feast Day of Anba Athanasius the Apostolic the 20th

Thirtieth of Pakhons: Feast Day of Anba Mikhail, the 68th

Twenty-eighth of Paoni: Feast Day of Anba Thaousosoios, the 33rd

Eighteenth of Mesori: Feast Day of Anba Alexandrus, Pope of Constantinople.

The Ecumenical Councils

Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea (ninth of Athor)

Matthew 16:13-19. In this Gospel, there is reference to Gods acceptance of the decisions taken by the Council: "Whatever you bind on earth, will be bound in heaven."

The Psalm refers to the same meaning. In his Episde, St. Paul speaks about faith, and through its grace, we become in peace with God.

Council of Nicea

Held in 325 A.D., bishops attended it to examine the Arian heresy. After discussing the belief of the Church in the divinity of the Incarnate Word, they signed what became known as "The Creed." It was worded for - them by Abba Alexandros and his deacon Athanasius, who succeeded him to the See. of St. Mark.

The Transferred Days:

Twelfth of Thuout: Commemoration of the 3rd Ecumenical Council of Ephesus

Third of Athor: Feast Day of St. Keriakous, member of the second Ecumenical Council

First of Mekher: Commemoration of the second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople

Fourth of Baramhat: The Council of the Fourteen at Bane Amr island [1].

1. Fr. M. E. Mikahil, Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt (Cleveland, Ohio: Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt 1982), p. 5.

The Bishops

The Bishops of the Eastern Church

Martyrdom of St. Sarabamoun, Bishop of Nicea (twenty-eighth of Athor)

John 16:20-33. This Gospel refers to God's acceptance Of the prayers and requests of the Bishops. As Jesus said to His disciples, "I tell you the truth, My Father will give you whatever you ask in My narne."

The Psalm says. "They called on the Lord and He answered them" [Psalm 99:6, 7]. In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the superiority of their ministry [Heb. 7:18-8:13].

The Transferred Days:

Ninth of Thuout: Martyrdom of Bishop Pisora of Egypt

Twenty-third of Paopi: Martyrdom of Bishop Dionasious of Coronthos

Fourth of Athor: Martyrdom of Bishop John and Jacob of Persia

Fourteenth of Athor: Feast Day of Martinos, Bishop of Theraky

Twenty-third of Athor: Feast Day of Cornelios, Bishop of Caesarea

Tenth of Khoiak: Feast Day of Nicholaous, Bishop of Mora

Nineteenth of Khoiak: Feast Day of John, Bishop of El Borolos

Twenty-seventh of Khoiak: Martyrdom of Besady, Bishop of Absay

Eighteenth of Tobi: Feast Day of Jacob, Bishop of Nasibin

Twenty-third of Tobi: Martyrdom of Timotaous, Bishop of Ephesus

Twenty-second of Mekher: Feast Day of Marouta, Bishop of Miaverkin

Twenty-fourth of Mekher: Feast Day of Agabitus, the Bishop

Second of Baramhat: Martyrdom of Makrawy, Bishop of Nekius

Fifth of Baramhat: Martyrdom of Sarabamoun, Archpriest of Abe Yehnis Monastery

Seventeenth of Baramhat: Feast Day of Lazarus, Bishop of Cyprus

Nineteenth of Baramudah: Martyrdom of Simon the Arminian Bishop of Persia

Eleventh of Pakhons: Feast Day of Bavnotios the Bishop

Seventeenth of Pakhons: Feast Day of Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyrene

Twenty-seventh of Pakhons: Commemoration to the death of Lazarus

Third of Paoni: Martyrdom of Alladios, the Bishop

Fourteenth of Paoni: Martyrdom of Abakeer, John and Abtalma the priests

Tenth of Epep: Martyrdom of Theodorus, Bishop of the Five Western Cities

Thirteenth of Epep: Feast Day of Besenteous, Bishop of Kelt

Eleventh of Mesori: Feast Day of Moisis. Bishop of Osseem

Twenty-fourth of Mesori: Feast day of nomas, Bishop of Marash

Fifth of El Nasie: Commemoration to Jacob, Bishop of Egypt and Anba Barsoum El Erian.

The Eastern Bishops

Martyrdom of St. Cyprianus, Bishop of Kartagna (twenty-first of Thuout)

Mark 3:28-35. This Gospel speaks about the Savior's reward to those who do His will: "Whoever does God's will is My brother and sister and mother."

The Psalm speaks about God's revelation of the ways of life. St. Paul, in his Epistle, speaks about their sharing as brothers in the grace of the Gospel.

He was an infidel and a magician, and he went to Antioch to practice his magic works. A young man asked him to use his magic to help him to gain Justina's heart, a Christian virgin who refused to marry him. Cyprianus used all his sorcery, but he failed because every time he sent her a devil, he found her praying, so he told Satan that if he failed to gain the heart of Justina he would become a Christian. Satan appeared to him in the shape of Justina, but when he called him by her name, he disappeared, so Cyprianus discovered the trick and burned all the books of magic.

He was baptized and became a monk, then a deacon, then a priest, and then the Bishop of Cartagena in the year 351 A.D. The King ordered him to raise incense to the idols. When he and St. Justina refused, he tortured them and finally cut off their heads.

The Transferred Days:

Twenty-third of Thuout: Martyrdom of Onanios the Bishop, and his brother, in El Led

Eleventh of Baramhat: Martyrdom of Basilaous, the Bishop in Sharsouna

Fourteenth of Baramhat: Martyrdom of Eugenius, Agathodorus and Elpidius, the Bishops

Twenty-first of Baramudah: Martyrdom of Brothaous, Bishop of Athens [1].

Martyrdom of Athansios, the Bishop (twenty-ninth of Mesori)

John 8:21-27. In this Gospel, Jesus speaks about the salvation of those who believe in Him as He said to the Pharisees, "I told you that you would die in your sins. if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."

The Psalm praises the Lord Who eases our ways, the God of our Salvation. In his Epistle, St. Paul tells the Bishop to be the good example for the Jews, Greeks, and to the Church of God.

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1. St. Mark and St. Bishoy Coptic Church, Coptic Synaxarium (Westmont, Illinois: St. Mark and St Bishoy Coptic Church, 1985), pp. 36-37.

St. Athanasius, the Bishop

Some evil persons told Erianos, the Ruler, that this saint had baptized the daughter of the Minister Antonious. So the Ruler brought him and ordered him to worship the idols. When he refused, and declared that he was a Christian, the Ruler tortured him severely, but when he saw his adherence to Christianity, he cut his head off and the heads of his two servants, Grasimus and Theotitus. Some of the faithfuls took their bodies and shrouded them and put them in a coffin. Many miracles occurred from their bodies [1].

J. The Monks

The Monastery Monks

Feast Day of the Great SL Anthony, the Father of Monasticism (twenty-second of Tobi)

Luke 12:32-44. In this Gospel, Jesus speaks about the grace that His faithful servants inherit: "It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when He returns." The Psalm refers to the same meaning.

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about their readiness and their devotion to prayers.

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1. The Fathers of Coptic Orthodox Church, The Coptic Synaxarium, VoL 2 (El rnahaba library: 1974), p. 543.

St. Anthony the Great

He is called the father of monks. He was born in Central Egypt in AD. 251. While still a youth, on entering the Church, he heard the Gospel saying, "Jesus said unto him 'If thou will be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me.'" He immediately sold all his assets, for he was rich, and gave to the poor. Then he devoted his life to Jesus in a place near his village. In 285 AD. he went along into the desert to live in complete solitude, his reputation attracted many followers, who settled near him.

He visited Alexandria twice, the first time during the persecution of Christians, and the second to support Pope Athanasius against heresy.

He died at the age of one hundred and five years. His life was written by St. Athanasius and was very influential in spreading the ideals of monasticism throughout the Christian world [1].

The Transferred Days:

Twenty-fourth of Paoni: Feast Day of Elarion the Monk

Ninth of Khoiak: Feast Day of Bemen, the Confessor

Thirteenth of Pakhons: Feast Day of Arsanios, the Monk

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1. Benedicta Ward S.LG., Christian Sayings of the Desert Fathers (New York: Macmillan Pubbshing Co., 1980), p. 1.

Nineteenth of Pakhons: Feast Day of Isaac, the Monk

Fifth of Paoni: Feast Day of Jacob El Meshreky

Seventeenth of Paoni: Feast Day of Lanson, the Monk

Twenty-third of Paoni: Feast Day of Abanoub, the Confessor

Twenty-fifth of Mesori: Feast Day of Besarion, the Great

Feast Day of St. Paula the Anchorite-the First Hermit (second of Mekher)

Mark 9:33-41. This Gospel refers to the Savior's acceptance of these hermit saints. "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in My name welcomes Me."

Tle Psalm says, *"O Lord, remember David and all the hardships he endured"* [Psalm 132:1, 2].

In his Epistle, St. Paul urges us to obey them and honor them as guides for the believers' souls.

Anba Paula, the First Hermit

He was born in Thebes (now Luxur) in 228 AD. His parents reared him up in the fear of God, so he grew up loving God and refusing the world. After the death of his parents, he quarrelled with his brother over the inheritance, and went to the Ruler. On their way, he saw a dead man

who was very rich, so St. Paula thought about death judgement and eternal life. He left all the inheritance to his brother and went to the desert where he prayed so that God might lead him to the way of salvation. By the guidance of God he went to the eastern desert of Egypt and lived there for seventy years with continuous prayers by the Spirit and righteousness. God sent him every day a crow with half a loaf of bread and he was drinking from a spring near his cave. He was visited by Anba Anthonious close to the time of his death who wrote his life story and buried him after his death in 241 AD. at the age of 113 years.

The Transferred Days:

Twentieth of Paopi: Feast Day of Anba John the Short

Seventh of Khoiak: Feast Day of St. Matta El Maskin

Twenty-fifth of Khoiak: Feast Day of St. John Karne

Seventh of Epep: Feast Day of Anba Shenouda the Archmendrite[1].

Martyrdom of St Macarious, Bishop of Edko (twenty-seventh of Paopi)

Savior's Glorification Through His Doings: Matthew 4:23-5:16.

This Gospel speaks about the Savior's glorification through the doings of the righteous man as it says, "So that

1. Anba Mettaos, Rohaneiet El Tasbeha, p. 257.

they may see goodness in your acts and give praise to your heavenly Father."

The Psalm points to their good life story as it says, "Blessed is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly." In his Episde, St. Paul speaks about their great faith.

St. Macarious, Bishop of Edko

He was honest in his service and many miracles were done by him. He went to the Council of Calcedon with St. Discoros and there he defended the Orthodox faith, so both of them were exiled to the Island of Gagra, from where St. Discoros sent him to Alexandria, telling him that there was a crown of martyrdom awaiting him there. When the King sent a message about believing in two separate natures of Jesus, he refused it, so he was killed by the apostle of the King [1].

The Transferred Days:

Ninth of Tobi: Feast Day of Abram friend of Gawargious

Fifth of Mekher: Feast Day of the 49 Elders of Shiheet

Twenty-seventh of Baramhat: Feast Day of St. Macarious the Great

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1. The Fathers of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Book of the Synaxarium Vol. 1 (El Mahaba library, 19174), pp. 1 13-1 1 5.

Eighteenth of Pakhons: Feast Day of St. Gawargious friend of Abram

Eighth of Epep: Feast Day of Anba Bishoy, owner of the monastery

Fourteenth of Epep: Feast Day of Anba Makar the Bishop

Nineteenth of Mesori: Feast Day of the Consecration of the body of St. Macarious to his monastery in Shiheet.

Fifth of Mesori: Feast Day of St. John the soldier and the worshipper.

Monks of the Column

Feast Day of St. Simon the Columnar--Transfer of His Body (third of Mesori)

Jesus is His Hope: Luke 14:25-35. This Gospel speaks about Jesus as the hope of this saint and his full aim, as Jesus says, "In the same way, none of you can be My disciple if he does not renounce all his possessions."

The Psalm points to this hope saying, "For you have been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy."

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about the necessity of depending on God alone as he says, "So then, neither is he that plants anything, nor he that waters, but God that gives the increase."

The Transferred Days:

Fourteenth of Thuout: Feast Day of Aghatho the Columnar

Seventeenth of Khoiak: Feast Day of Luke the Columnar

Nineteenth of Mekher: Feast Day of Barsouma, father of the Scrian monks

Second of Pakhons: Feast Day of Tadros, pupil of Bakhomious

Fourteenth of Pakhons: Feast of Bakhomious, father of Partnership

Twenty-first of Pakhons: Feast Day of Martinianous

Twenty-ninth of Pakhons: Feast Day of Simon the Columnar

Twenty-fourth of Paoni: Feast Day of Anba Moses the Black

Fifteen of Epep: Feast Day of Ephram the Serian

The Hermits

Feast Day of St. Amonious, the Antakian Herinit (twentieth of Pakhons)

The Law of the Savior is in His Heart: Luke 16:1.12. This Gospel speaks about the presence of God's Law in the hearts of those hermits as they are considered as honest stewards, as it says, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much." The Psalm points to the same meaning as it says, "God's Law is in his heart."

In his Epistle, St. Paul demonstrates that these saints had taken Jesus as their basis and built on it.

The Transferred Days:

Seventh of Paopi: Feast Day of Anba Paula of Tamouh

Thirteenth of Paopi: Feast Day of Zakariah the Monk

Twenty-fifth of Paopi: Feast Day of Apollo and Abib

Thirtieth of Paopi: Feast Day of Ebrahim the Hermit

Twelfth of Khoiak: Feast Day of Hedra of Aswan

Fourteenth of Tobi: Feast Day of Archilidis

Twenty-fifth of Tobi: Feast day of Peter the Worshipper

Third of Mekher: Feast Day of Jacob the Monk Twelfth of Mekher: Feast Day of Galasious the Hermit

Nineteenth of Mekher: Feast Day of the Consecration of the relics of Martinianous the Monk

Ninth of Baramhat: Feast day of Konan the Warrior

First of Baramudah: Feast Day of Selwanes the Monk

Tenth of Baramudah: Feast Day of Isaac the warrior

Twenty-ninth of Paoni: Feast Day of the Martyrdom of the seven hermits

Fourth of El Nasie: Feast Day of Bimin the Egyptian hermit.

The Anchorites

Feast Day of Anha Noffer the Anchorite (sixteenth of Paoni)

The Grace of the Savior to Him: Luke 12:32-44. This Gospel speaks about the grace of the Savior to those who are honest and wakeful, as it says, "I tell you, he will put on an apron, seat them at table and proceed to wait on them."

The Psalm points to this, saying "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God".

In his Epistle, St. Paul speaks about their wakefulness and patience in militancy.

Anba Noffer the Anchorite

While he was a youth, he became a monk in the Monastery of Behermopolis in the Ashmonin. After a time, he left the monastery and walked southwards where he was led by an angel to a big cave, where there was a saint who taught him how to be an anchorite. So he lived alone in a far place beside a palm tree, which gave twelve bunches a year besides a spring of water, and sufficed him. He remained in that place for sixty years without seeing the face of any human being. He reached a very high degree of hermitism.

God arranged that he is visited by St. Baphnotious close to the time of his death, and after he wrote his story, Anba Noffer died. St. Baphnotious shrouded him and buried him in his cave[1].

1. Ibid., pp. 340-342.

THE GREAT LENT
Introduction [1]

Readings During the Great Lent

1. The Nature of the Texts

The texts read during the Great Lent are different from those which we read during the rest of the year. During Lent, the Church has no Vespers except for Sundays.

2. Prophecies

The days of Lent, together with the three holy days of Jonah and the Holy Week, proclaim prophecies from the Old Testament.

On the weekdays of the seven weeks of Lent, we read the prophecies before the prime Gospel.

As for Saturdays and Sundays, which are considered as holidays, in which happiness and delight should prevail, we do not read prophecies.

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1. Banoub Abdou, Kenoz El-Ne'ma, Vol. 4 (Cairo, Egypt: The Sheraty Bookstore, 1963), pp. 25-32.

3. Topics of Readings

The Church divided Lent into seven weeks: the first week is for preparation, in which all reading talks about spiritual growth, repentance, and deep fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Subsequent weeks are for general teaching.

Readings from Psalms, Gospels, Pauline and Catholic Epistles and Acts follow the same system as other days of the year (see Weekdays Introduction).

The Church has a strong program during this fast put by the Fathers through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, which became to the soul a source of survival and spiritual filling, and to the Church a source of communal repentance and deep fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ in His fast. For Christ fasted for us and with us--certainly He is a partner with each fasting soul.

The monks used to take this opportunity of the holy fast to leave their monasteries for the wilderness in solitude and in the fullness of the company of the Lord Jesus, and the fellowship of His Holy Spirit. At the end of Lent, they returned to their monasteries (as was recorded for us in the tale of St. Mary the Egyptian and her meeting with St. Zosima the Priest).

In addition, the Church considered the Great Lent a dedication program for the teaching of catechumen who were admitted to the faith, and who at Easter were baptized in the name of the Trinity--that is, they were buried and resurrected with Christ. The procession which the Church conducts these days for the newly baptized baby, was in the

past the procession of Resurrection which the catechumens experienced at their baptism and resurrection in the Lord at Easter.

On these days, the Church as a body practices absolute abstention, daily liturgies, the life of repentance and contrition before God. We can find through meditation on the Sunday readings a strong spiritual program for every soul, which may be titled, "The Journey to the Bosom of the Father." The journey starts in a frank and clear invitation in the Gospel of the Preparation Sunday for the entry into the closet for a dialogue with the Father.

Fast of Jonah

The Nature of the Readings

The annual readings are distinguished by the fact that there is always a prophecy read before the morning Gospel. The readings are taken from the Book of Jonah, as a whole, divided sequentially for the three days of abstinence in commemoration of Jonah.

The Topics of the Readings

All texts evolve around the same topic. For each day, the texts deal with one specific subject which is the salvation of man emanating from his belief in the Resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, to whom Jonah was an indication. The topics for the three days are:

1. Monday: lie call for sinners to repent. The prophecy proclaims God's call for the people of Nineveh
to repent by sending Jonah to them. The Vespers' Gospel speaks about the Savior's call for the people to repent: "If you do not repent, you will all perish." The Matins' Gospel concerns God's mercy towards His people and their cry for forgiveness. As for the Liturgy Gospel, it deals with the penitents' continued life of grace.

The Pauline Epistle urges people to live in the fear of God, while the Catholic Epistle deals with the perishment of sinners. The Acts deals with the growth of the Church by the penitents' return to the Lord away from the life of sin.

2. Tuesday: Urging the sinners to hear the Word of God. The prophecy read deals with God's attentive ear to the sinners' repentance as He heard Jonah's cry while he was in the belly of the whale. The Matin's Gospel deals with God's tolerance with sinners and the Liturgy Gospel is about the Saviors constant call for the people to listen to the Word of God. The Pauline Epistle is about the necessity to hear the Word of God, and the Catholic Epistle talks about the importance of turning from evil ways, while the Acts call for repentance.

3. Wednesday: Forgiveness for penitents. The prophecy here evolves around God's delight with penitents. The Matins' Gospel proclaims God's mercy to those who repent, and the Liturgy Gospel declares the Savior's forgiveness for penitent sinners.

The Pauline Epistle talks about the grace of salvation to those who repent, the Catholic Epistle refers to renouncing

worldly pleasures, while the Acts calls for the mercy towards repentant sinners.

4. Thursday: The Feast of Jonah. On that day is declared the salvation of those who believe in Christ's Resurrection. The Matins' Gospel deals with the Savior's support to those who believe in His ability to forgive their sins. The Liturgy Gospel proclaims the Lord's power evident in His Resurrection.

The Pauline Epistle declares the salvation of those who believe in His Resurrection, the Catholic Epistle proclaims salvation by the Sacrament of Baptism, which is considered a symbol of our Lord's death and Resurrection, and the Acts talk about the blessings bestowed on the people by our Lord's Resurrection[1].

God as Revealed in the Book of Jonah:

1. God seeks man: The book of Jonah presents to us God as the one seeking man and not the other way around. The Almighty Himself seeks the souls on the ship for their redemption. He also seeks the lost souls in Nineveh so that they would convert and be saved.

2. God uses punishment as a tool to convert the sinful soul: God, the compassionate, does not abstain from using punishment and apprehension in beneficial ways for the salvation of man. In the book of Jonah, we find three examples of this:

1. Banoub Abdou Kenoz El-Ne'ma, Vol. 4, pp. 52-80.

a. A distant threat to the people of Nineveh

b. Affliction from external forces against the ship's mariners and Jonah

c. Punishment as He commanded the whale to swallow Jonah

3. God's willingness to retreat His fierce anger: God is always ready to retreat from punishing man if he is ready to turn from his evil ways, as we see in the book of Jonah: *'And God relented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them; and He did it not'* [Jonah 3: 10].

4. God's tolerance: Undoubtedly, God is tolerant with sinners, hoping they would repent for He hopes that the sinner would turn from his evil ways sooner or later. God was tolerant long enough with Jonah with the ship's mariners, and with the people of Nineveh; they were all saved.

5. God is for all: God worked on the hearts of everybody. He worked on Jonah, on the people of Nineveh, and on the mariners until they were transformed, as it were, into holy receptacles for His Spirit. He granted them the gift of purity and holiness. We should never, therefore, despair for God, who worked on Jonah, the people of Nineveh, and the mariners, is the same God who is capable of working on us and with us.

6. God likes to discuss His acts with man: As we see in the fourth chapter of the book of Jonah, where He discussed with Jonah why He forgave the people of Nineveh and

convinced him as if He says, "I should descend to Jonah to raise him to Me. I want to discuss with him to gain him.

7. All God's arrangements are successful: He succeeded to lead the mariners, Jonah, and the people of Nineveh into repentance, and His knowledge. He worked with each of them by the suitable method to him. The book of Jonah is the story of the success of God's work [1].

1. H. H. Pope Shenouda III, Conternplation on the Book of Jonah, the Prophet (Cairo, Egypt: 1984), pp. 37-46.

Selections Read During the Fast of Jonah

Day	Sunday before the fast	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Vespers					
Psalm	32:8,16	94:1,2			
Gospel	Mark 11:22-26	Luke 13:1-5			
Matins					
Prophecy		Jonah1:1-2:1	Jonah2:2-etc.	Jonah3:1-4:1etc.	
Psalm	99:1,2	102:1,7	102:11,8,9	102:12,11	102:10,11
Gospel	Luke21:34-38	Matt7:6-12	Luke13:6-9	Matt11:25-etc.	Mark8:1-21
Liturgy					
Pauline Epistle	2Cor11:16-12:10	Rom6:17-27	Col. 1:21-etc.	Eph.2:1-etc.	Rom.10:4-18
Catholic Epistle	2Pet. 1:1-8	Jude 1:3-11	1Pet. 4:3-11	1John 2:12-17	1Pet. 3:17-21
Acts	21:15-26	2:38-48	17:30 – etc.	15: 12-20	3:22-26
Psalm	2:7	129:2,4	84:2	31:1, 6	117:5, 18
Gospel	Matt. 6:1-18	Matt.12:35-45	Luke11:29-36	Matt.15:32-16:2	John2:12-25

All the tables of the Great Lent from:

1 . Coptic Orthodox Patriarch, The Coptic 0rthodox Lectionary [Katamarous], the Great Lent volume (Cairo, Egypt:1974).
2. Banoub Abdou, Kenoz El Ne'ma, Vol. 4 (Cairo, Egypt: The Sheraty Bookstore, 1963), pp. 25-25.
3. St. Mina Monastery, Natiga Daweria Tabkhan Lel Takweem El Kopty waal Malady (Alexandria, Egypt), pp. 14-16.

Preparatory Sunday: Matthew 6:1-18

"When thou prayest enter into thy closet ... shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret ... Also if thou givest alms or fastest that also should be to the Father in secret..."

The Point of Departure of the Journey. The Church declares to us the closet is the point of departure of the journey of Lent. If it does not start at the closet, then the journey of our fast has deviated from its true course. The Church starts the fast by directing us to the closet. This means that the fast is not only related to the flesh, but it is related more to the Spirit and to the Kingdom of God. (The Life of Prayer, p. 545). The week of preparation is the week of the closet.

Close Your Door. The Journey Starts -after closing the door--the door that looks at the world. Then there opens before us another door that faces heaven *"Our Father who art in heaven,* " and *'I looked, and, behold a door was opened in heaven"* [Rev.4:1].

"Fasting is not a fetter or a prison to the senses but a soaring with them without hindrance towards contemplation of God" (Life of Prayer, p. 454).

Pray to Your Father. The Church has set a standard to the level of faith of the catechumens before they are allowed to receive the Sacrament of Baptism. The standard is that the Church continues teaching the catechumens about the Lord's Prayer, which starts with "Our Father ..." and at the moment they perceive and comprehend the paternity of God

to them, they are entitled to receive the Sacrament of Baptism.

Your Father Who Sees in Secret. This is the secret of the prayer of the closet which the Church perceived and so allotted to it the deepest of prayers like the prayer of the wise virgins awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom and the prayer of the fallen woman at the feet of the Lord Jesus (Prayer of the closet of "Matins"). Where in the closet we discover our sins ... and we hold the feet of the Lord to free our feet from the prodigal road, and we taste the love of God, and learn contrition, and thus the goal of the journey of our fast becomes the withdrawal of the soul into itself (in secret) where the Lord purifies it with His blood and dedicates her a temple for Him and adorns her with His talents so that she may participate with the wise virgins in the meeting of the Bridegroom.

Since the journey is with the soul and Christ, it is an invisible relationship that begins in the chamber. So, fasting is accompanied by a reduction in talking and visits and by concentrating on spiritual readings and attending the Divine Liturgy.[1]

Our Heavenly Father is calling you to a holy participation with Him in secret, through which you may start your fast,

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1. All the explanations for the Great Lent are taken from: Fr. Bishoy Kamel, The Lectionary During the Lent (Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic 0rthodox Church, 1974).

your prayers, and your almsgiving. So beware of negligence.

Practice. The practice in the week of preparation is dying prayer of the chamber and the worship in secret, which will continue with us all through and after the period of fasting.

Selections Read During the Great Lent

Preparation Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm							16:1,2
Gospel							Matt6:34-7:12
Matins							
Prophecy	Ex2:23-3:5 Is1:2-18	Is1:19-2:3 Zech8:7-13	Is2:3-11 Joel 12:12-27	Is2:11-19 Zech8:18-etc.	Det6:3-7:1 Is3:1-14		
Psalm	6:1, 2	12:1, 2	24:5, 6	23:1, 2	23:1, 2	118:39	17:1
Gospel	Matt12:24-34	Matt9:10-15	Luke6:24-34	Luke8:22-25	Luke5:12-16	Matt5:25-37	Matt7:22-etc.
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom1:26-2:7	Rom9:15-29	Rom14:19-15:7	1Cor4:16-5:6	Rom12:6-etc.	Rom12:1-etc	Rom13:1-etc
Catholic Epistle	James2:1-13	1Pet4:3-11	2Pet1:4-10	1John1:8-2:11	3John1:1-etc.	James1:1-12	James1:13-21
Acts	14:19-etc	5:34-etc.	10:9-20	8:3-13	2:42-3:9	21:27-39	21:40-22:16
Psalm	21:25	24:15, 16	24:18, 15	17:13, 18	12:6	5:1	21:1, 3
Gospel	Mark9:23-etc.	Luke12:41-50	Luke 6:35-38	Mark4:21-29	Luke11:1-10	Matt5:38-etc	Matt6:19-33
Evening							
Psalm							47:8, 9
Gospel							Luke6:27-38

The First Sunday: The Journey of Lent

Surrender of life to the Heavenly Father: Matthew 6:19-33. The Gospel of the First Sunday of Lent calls for the surrender of life to the Father. *"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat ... nor Yet for the body, what ye shall put on ... Take no thought for the morrow."* The reason for not worrying is that *"your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"* [Mt. 6:32].

Practice. The Practice of this week is a call to a secure life in the care of the Father and the carrying out of what comes in the verse. "Take no thought for the morrow," physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The Christian commandment is full of risks but its assurance is the care of the Father. The woman who gave the two mites was risking her meal, and during the fast, Satan rages his war by convincing us that we are risking the necessities of the body and causes us to worry about our health, and likewise in charity there is a risk of wealth.

In this week we experience the complete surrender to the care of the Father and to His commandment.

First Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm							50:1-9
Gospel							Mark1:12-15
Matins							
Prophecy	Ex3:6-14 Is4:2-5:7	Job19:1-7 Is5:7-16	Ex2:11-20 Is5:17-25	Deut5:15—33 Is6:1-12	Deut8:9:4 Is7:1-14 1Sam17:16-18:8 Job11:1-etc		
Psalm	39:10	40:4, 12	17:17, 18	27:10	114:6	24:7, 10	56:1
Gospel	Mark9:25-29	Luke12:22-31	Matt5:17-24	Matt11:20-etc	Matt15:39-16:12	Mark9:43-etc.	Luke4:1-13
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom1:18-25	2Cor9:6-15	Rom3:17-etc.	Rom16:17-etc.	Heb12:28-13:16	Rom14:1-18	Rom14:19-15:7
Catholic Epistle	Jude1:1-8	James1:1-12	2John1:8-etc.	James3:1-12	1Pet4:7-16	James1:22-etc.	James2:1-13
Acts	4:36-5:11	4:13-22	5:3-11	12:12-23	15:22-31	22:17-etc.	23:1-11
Psalm	28:1, 2	40:1	17:1	47:8, 9	28:11	117:19, 20	26:11-13
Gospel	Luke18:1-8	Mark10:17-27	Matt15:32-38	Matt19:16-etc	Luke6:39-41	Matt7:13-21	Matt4:1-11
Evening							
Psalm							40:1
Gospel							Luke4:1-13

The Second Sunday

Why does God forget us if He Is our Father? Matthew 4:1-10. The Gospel of the Second Sunday deals with the temptation of doubting God's paternity to us. "if you are the Son of God--why does he leave you hungry? Why does God allow the presence of disease, failure and the death of our beloved?"

Practice. It is our duty this week to examine our faith in the love of the Father Who gave His Son for us: our faith that fortifies us against the temptations and emotions; faith in the Father; a faith that fortifies us against the temptation of the Adversary, the hardships of this world, and the sufferings and desires of the body.

Second Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm							98:1, 2
Gospel							Matt15:1-20
Matins							
Prophecy	Prov1:20-etc Is8:13-9:7	Prov2:1-15 Is10:12-20	Ex4:19-6:13 Joel2:21-26 Is9:9-10:4 Job12:13,14	Prov2:16-3:4 Is11:10-etc Is12:1,2	Is13:2-13 Job15:1-etc Deut9:7-10:11 1King23:26-24:11 Sirakh2:1-3:4		
Psalm	31:1, 2	31:11	26:5	9:7, 8	15:10, 11	129:1, 2	54:1, 14
Gospel	Luke19:11-28	Luke12:54-etc.	Luke13:18-22	Luke20:20-26	Luke20:27-38	Mark10:17-27	Matt20:1-16
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	1Cor5:9-6:5	Rom4:1-8	2Thess2:9-17	Rom4:6-11	Heb11:1-8	2Cor7:2-11	2Cor6:2-13
Catholic Epistle	1Pet1:3-12	1John2:1-11	2Pet2:9-15	James4:1-10	Jude1:17-etc	James2:14-etc	James3:1-12
Acts	17:1-14	27:9-12	28:7-11	28:1-6	23:6-11	23:12-etc	24:1-23
Psalm	31:5, 6	31:2, 3	26:10, 11	9:4	15:1	26:10, 11	78: 7, 8
Gospel	Luke11:33-36	John8:31-39	Luke4:1-13	John12:44-50	Luke11:14-26	Matt18:23-etc.	Luke15:11-32
Evening							
Psalm							29:1-3
Gospel							Matt21:28-32

The Third Sunday

Repentance in the Father's bosom: Luke 15:11-32. Repentance in Christianity is different from any other repentance it is the return of the son to his Father and the Father falling on the neck of his son to embrace him and kiss him [Luke 15:20]. This is the Gospel of the Third Sunday.

The Father's paternity to us is not because of our righteousness, but because of His paternity to His children especially the sinners.

The Father's paternity for us challenges all our sins, our failures, our betrayal of His love and our mistreatment of His name.

Practice: Brother, do not permit this week to go by without a true repentance and resorting to the Father's embrace ... Examine this in your chamber and taste the Father's embrace and His kisses which are reserved only for those who repent. This is the week of repentance in the Father's bosom. the repentance of the whole Church-the communal repentance.

Third Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm							26:17, 16
Gospel							Luke12:22-31
Matins							
Prophecy	Job16, 17 Gen27:1-41 Is14:24-etc	Job18 Gen28:10-22 Is25:1-26:8	Ex7:14-8:18 Joel2:28-32 Job1:1-22 Is26:21-27:60	Gen32:1-30 Job20:1-etc Is28:14-22 Dan6:1-17	Job21:1-etc Deut1:12-11:28 Is29:13-23 Dan14:1-42		
Psalm	54:1, 26:11	16:1	17:38, 41	11:9	27:7, 8	141:5, 7	30:28, 26
Gospel	Luke14:7-15	Matt21:28-32	Luke14:16-34	Mark3:7-12	Luke4:31-37	Luke16:19-31	Matt22:1-14
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom8:12-26	Eph4:1-16	Eph4:17-etc	1Cor12:31-14:1	Heb13:7-16	Phil4:4-9	Eph6:10-etc
Catholic Epistle	Jasmes5:16-etc	2Pet2:2-8	James3:13-4:4	James4:11-5:3	1John4:7-16	James3:13-4:6	James4:7-17
Acts	11:2-18	27:1-3	11:26-12:2	4:19-31	22:17-24	24:24-25:12	25:13-26:1
Psalm	54:1, 15	16:6	17:19, 17	47:8, 9	27:2	60:1, 4	104: 2, 3
Gospel	Luke16:1-9	Luke9:57-etc.	Mark4:35-etc.	Luke18:35-etc.	Matt15:21-31	Matt21:3-etc.	John4:1-42
Evening							
Psalm							31:11, 12
Gospel							John4:19-24

The Fourth Sunday

Worship of the Father in Spirit and in Truth: John 4:1.42. The next step after repentance is worship of the Father Who accepted and loved me and cleansed me from my sins, and put me in his bosom. Contrition of the spirit and submission to the Father and the love of frequent prostrations in worship are the expressions of our love for Him Who opened His arms for us sinners and kissed us. This is the end of the road of repentance in the Father's bosom, and this is the sweetest fruit of the chamber and which the Father gives us in secret.

The Church inspired by the Spirit, stresses in the period of Lent the use of prostrations during private prayers and in the Divine Liturgy (at the "Offering of Incense" after the readings of the prophets).

Practice. The practice of this week is the worship of the Father in truth and in Spirit : *':for the Father seeketh such to worship Him"* [John 4:23]

Fourth Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm							38:12, 13
Gospel							Luke18:1-8
Matins							
Prophecy	Prov3:5-18 Job22:1-etc Is37:33-38:6	Num10:35-11:34 Prov3:19-4:9 Is40:1-8 Job25,26	Ex8:20-9:etc Is41:4-14 Joel3:9-etc Job28:12-etc Prov4:10-19	Is42:5-16 Prov4:20-27 Job29:2-20	Deut11:29-12:27 Is43:1-9 1king17:2-etc Prov5:1-12 Job30:9-32:5		
Psalm	87:2, 3	85:5, 6	54:1	85:13	85:8, 9	64:2, 3	101:1, 10
Gospel	Luke12:16-21	Mark9:14-24	Mark10:1-12	Luke9:37-43	Mark12:28-34	Luke15:3-10	Matt21:23-etc
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Phil2:1-16	Phil2:22-26	Rom4:14-5:5	1Cor10:15-11:1	Heb12:5-16	Gal5:16-6:2	2Thess2:1-etc.
Catholic Epistle	1Pet3:10-18	1John3:2-11	1Pet4:12-etc.	1Pet1:2-8	1Pet4:15-5:5	James5:7-11	2Pet3:1-etc
Acts	10:25-35	24:10-23	11:12-18	21:5-14	15:36-16:3	26:1-18	26:19-27:8
Psalm	85:3, 4	85:16	85:12, 13	85:16, 17	138:1	142:1	32:5, 6
Gospel	Luke9:12-17	John8:12-20	Luke13:6-9	Luke13:10-17	John8:21-27	Matt23:13-etc.	John5:1-18
Evening							
Psalm							141:1
Gospel							Matt9:1-8

The Fifth Sunday

Bethesda and Baptism: John 5:1-18 The Gospel of the Fifth Sunday talks about Bethesda which symbolizes Baptism. We, the crowds of Christians, were beside it sick, lame, blind and paralysed, suffering every spiritual sickness. The angel which moves the water symbolizes the Holy Spirit which comes down on the water of Baptism.

This is our share in Christ: those who are baptized have everlasting hope in the Father, even if they have been sick for 38 years.

Practice. The practice of this week is to hope and never to despair. Baptism has given us the grace of sonship and children are never disappointed in their hopes in the love of the Father.

Fifth Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm							16:3,5
Gospel							Luke13:22-etc.
Matins							
Prophecy	Prov8:1-11 Job32:6-16 Is43:10-etc.	Prov8:12-21 Is44:1-8 Job32:17-33:etc	Ex10:1-11:1 Is44:22-etc. Prov8:22-etc. Job31:1-etc	2Kings4:8-41 Is45:1-10 Prov9:1-11 Job35:1-16	Gen22:1-18 Is45:11-17 Prov9:12-etc. Job36:1-37 Tobia: all		
Psalm	37:9	34:15	101:14, 17	9:1, 10	50:7, 8	78:7, 8	25:1
Gospel	Mark12:1-12	Luke4:22-30	Mark7:1-20	Luke20:9-19	John3:14-21	Matt9:1-8	Matt23:1-etc.
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	1Thess4:1-18	1Cor14:18-28	Rom2:12-24	1Tim2:1-3:4	1Cor10:1-13	Eph4:1-7	Col3:5-17
Catholic Epistle	James4:7-12	James1:22-2:1	2Pet1:20-2:6	Jude 1:19-etc.	1John2:12-17	1Pet 1:13-21	1John5:13-etc
Acts	18:9-18	19:11-20	26:1-8	27:16-20	8:9-17	27:9-26	27:27-37
Psalm	34:1, 2	41:1	9:7, 8	9:10	33:4, 3	31:1, 2	142:7, 10
Gospel	Luke13:1-5	Luke9:18-22	Luke11:45-52	John6:47-etc.	John3:1-13	Mark10:46-etc.	John9:1-etc.
Evening							
Psalm							40:1
Gospel							Mark8:22-26

The Sixth Sunday

Sonship is a spiritual enlightenment: John 9:1-41. The last Sunday in Lent is the Sunday of Baptism during which is read the Gospel of the man born blind.

1. "I was blind and now I see." This is our everlasting experience as children of the Heavenly Father. We were blind and He opened our sight so we beheld miracles of His laws and we saw what the prophets longed to see, and He gave us understanding of the Scriptures.

2. Baptism means washing (in the pool of Siloam), so we become pure. Repentance is a continuous washing, so we may see clearly.

Repentance is a continuation of Baptism and it is the means through which we can see Christ clearly all our lives. Lasting repentance cleans our hearts, renews the intellect, protects the contrite soul in the obedience of the Father, and through repentance, we can discover all the graces and secrets of the Heavenly Father.

Sixth Week	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**	**Sunday**
Matins							
Prophecy	Prov10:1-16 Is48:7-49:4 Job38:1-36	Prov10:17-etc. Is49:6-10 Job38:37-39:etc.	Prov10:32-11:13 Is58:1-11 Job40:1-41:etc.	Prov11:13-26 Is65:8-16 Job42:1-6	Gen49:23-51:1 Prov11:27-12:22 Is66:10-24 Job42:7-17	Zech9:9-15 Gen49:1-28 Is40:9-etc. Zeph3:14-etc.	On a separate page
Psalm	31:11, 12	37:18	56:1	62:1	97:5, 6	29:3, 1	
Gospel	Luke16:19-etc.	Luke17:1-10	Luke14:28-etc.	Matt20:20-28	Luke17:20-36	Luke18:35-43	
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom14:10-15:2	1Cor14:5-17	Rom10:4-13	2Cor4:5-18	2Tim3:1-4:5	1Cor2:1-8	
Catholic Epistle	James2:5-13	2Pet3:8-15	James1:13-21	1John3:13-24	James5:7-12	1Pet2:25-2:6	
Acts	9:22-31	22:17-24	19:23-26	25:23-26:6	15:1-18	27:38-28:10	
Psalm	85:11, 12	50:1, 2	50:1, 2	121:1, 2	97:1-18	128:8, 2	
Gospel	John5:31-etc.	John12:36-43	John6:35-45	Mark12:18-27	Luke13:31-etc.	John11:1-45	

The Last Friday of the Lent
The Kandeel
(A prayer to sanctify the patient by rubbing oil)

Prayer	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh
Epistle	James 5:1-20	Rom 15:1-2	1Cor 12:28-13:8	Rom 8:14-21	Gal 2:16-20	Col 3:12-17	Eph 6:10-18
Psalm	6:2, 1	101:1, 2	37:1, 2	50:1	141:7, 8	4:1	24:17, 18
Gospel	John5:1-17	Luke19:1-10	Matt10:1-8	Luke10:1-9	John14:1-19	Luke7:36-50	Matt6:14-18

The Three Lakkans
(A prayer to sanctify water)

The Lakkan	Feast of Jesus' Baptism	Second	Third
Prophesies	Hab 3:2-19; Is35:1, 2 Is 40:1-5; Is9:1, 2; Barokh3:38-56; 4:1-4; Ezek36:24-29; 47:1-9	Gen 18:1-23; Prov9:1-11 Ex14, 15; Is1, 3 Is4:1-4; 55:1-13; Is56:1; Ezeck36:25-28; 47:1-9	Ex15:22-16:1; 30:17-30; Is1:16-26; 35:1-10; 43:16; 44:1-6; Zech8:7-19; 14:8-11
Pauline Epistle	1Cor 10: 1-13	1Tim 4:9-16; 5:1-16	Heb 10:22-38
Psalm	113:3-5	50:7-10	50:7-10
Gospel	Matt 3:1-17	John 13:1-17	John 5:1-18

Palm Sunday

Round of palm tree: branches of devotions:

Psalm	103:4, 137:1	86:2,5,7	33:6,7	102:17, 18	67:13	18:3,4
Gospel	John1: 44-52	Luke1: 39-56	Luke1: 26-38	Matt13: 44-52	Luke10: 1-12	Matt10: 1-8
Psalm	96:11	67:4,33	83:1,2	28:3,4	117:19,20	51:7,8
Gospel	Luke21: 12-19	Matt16: 24-28	Luke13: 22-30	Matt3: 13-17	Matt21: 1-11	Luke7: 28-35

Vespers

Psalm	117:25,26			
Gospel	John 12: 1-11			

Matins

Psalm	67: 19,33			
Gospel	Luke 19: 1-10			

Liturgy

Pauline Epistle	Heb. 9: 11-28			
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet. 4:1-11			
Acts	28:11-31			
Psalm	80:3,1,2		64:1,2	
Gospel	Matt.21:1-17	Mark11:1-11	Luke 19:29-48	John12:12-19

General Funeral Ceremony Prayer

Prophecy Ezek. 37: 1-14

Selections Read	Dead Man	Dead Woman	Dead Child
Pauline Epistle	1Cor.15: 1-23	1Cor. 15: 39-49	1Thess. 4: 13-18
Psalm	64:4,5	114:6,3,4	15:8, 9
Gospel	John 5:19-29	Matt 26:6-13	Luke 7: 11-16

The Seventh Sunday

The Kingdom of the Beloved Son: Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-48; and John 12:12-19.

This week begins with the entrance of Christ to rule Jerusalem, riding on an ass, and ends by Him ruling from the Cross on Calvary where He draws all to Him--all the children to rule with Him in the Kingdom of His Father.

HOLY WEEK
Introduction of the Holy Week[1]

The Nature of the Text Selected During the Holy Week

1. **Prophecies.** The number of prophecies read during the day ranges between two and five throughout the whole week, except on Good Friday. On that day, in the first hour there are eleven read; in the third hour there are six, **and** in the evening hour prayers, there is only one reading.

2. **Sermons.** Sermons are given only in the first hour, as well as the ninth hour and the eleventh hour of the morning prayers of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

3. **The Gospels.** These are read in all the morning hours while in the evening hours, only one Gospel is read on Monday through Wednesday.

On Thursday, One Gospel text is read until the ninth hour of the morning. Another Gospel (El Lakkan) is read at the

1- All theTables are taken from the following sources:
The Coptic Orthodox Lectionary [Katamarousl The Holy Week, Vol. 3 (Cairo, Egypt: 1974).
Banoub Abdou, Kenoz el-Nelma, Vol. 5 (Cairo, Egypt: The Sheraty Bookstore), pp. 76-587.
St. Mina Monastery, Natiga Daweria Tebkan lei Takweem El Kopty waal Miladi (Alexandria, Egypt: St. Mina Monastery), pp. 18-21.

eleventh hour, followed by the Gospel of the Divine Liturgy.

In the evening of Good Friday, we read the four Gospels from Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

On Saturday of Delight, we read one Gospel in the first, third, and sixth hours of the day, followed by the whole book of Revelation. Then, one Gospel is read on the ninth hour, followed by the Divine Liturgy.

4. **Interpretation.** Interpretation (El Tarh) is read after every Gospel.

Topics of the Text Readings

The topics for the Holy Week follow the same pattern of those in texts read during Lent.

The first prophecy read during any hour of the day as well as the Pauline--if read--the Gospel and the Sermon, all speak about one topic. The rest of the prophecies fulfil the first prophecy. They are all arranged to fit the life of Jesus Christ during His last week on earth.

The following summary will take us, day by day, starting from Palm Sunday through this treasure of events and teachings as they had happened.

The Readings of the Hours of The Holy week (Pascha)
Palm Sunday

Hour	First	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Eleventh
Morning Prophesies				Lam. 1:1-4 Zeph3:11-20	Is 48:12-etc. Nah 1:2-8
Psalm				8: 2,3	21: 21, 22
Gospel				Matt.21: 10-17	Matt.20: 20-28
Evening Prophesies	Zeph. 1:2-12	Zeph. 1:14-18 2: 1, 2	Joel 1: 5-15	Mic. 2: 3-10	Mic. 3: 1-4
Psalm	26: 10-11	27: 10,2	28: 1,2	16: 6,1	17: 16, 17
Gospel	John 12: 20-36	Luke 9: 18-22	Mark 10: 32-34	Mark 8: 27-33	Matt. 17: 18-23

Palm Sunday [1].

Jesus left His native region, Galilee, to minister in Judea and Perea on His way to Jerusalem. On this visit to Jerusalem He would be crucified, and would rise from the dead. He would enter the city triumphantly to fulfil an old prophecy as it came in Zechariah 9:9.

1. All the explanations of the Holy Week readings are taken from: St. Mark's Church, The Coptic Orthodox Youth Periodicals, Vol.l. No.2 (Montreal Canada: St. Mark’s Church, 1983).

When Jesus and His disciples reached Bethphage at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of His disciples, saying to them *"Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them unto Me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them,'and straightway he will send them"* [Mat. 21:2,3].

The two disciples went and found it as Jesus had said to them. They brought the ass and the colt, laid their garments upon the colt, and set Jesus upon it.

As He rode, a great multitude spread their garments on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds began to shout: *"Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest' [Mt.* 21:9].

Jesus went into the temple, and threw out the merchants and money changers, and said to them, *"It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves"* [Mt. 21:13].

Monday of Pascha

Hour	First	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Eleventh
Morning Prophesies	Gen 1:1-31 2:1-3 Is 5:1-9 Josh 1:1-24	Is 5:20-30 Jer 9:12-19	Ex 32:7-15 Song 1:1-9	Gen 2:15-25 3:1-24 Is 40:1-5 Prov 1:1-9	Is 50:1-3 Josh 1:25-30
Sermon	Anba Shenouda the Archimandrite				Anba Shenouda the Archimandrite
Psalm	71:18	121:1, 2	121:4	64:4, 6	12:4
Gospel	Mark 11:12-24	Mark 11:11-19	John 2:13-17	Matt 21:23-27	John 8:51-59
Evening Prophesies	Zech 1:1-6	Mal 1:1-9	Hos 4:15-18, 5:1-7	Hos 10:12-15 11:1, 2	Amos 5:6-14
Psalm	61:4, `1	12:4, 6	90: 1, 2	32:10, 11	121:4
Gospel	Luke 13:23-30	Luke 13:21-30	Luke 21:34-38	Luke 11:37-52	Mark 13:32-37 14:1, 2

Monday

Early in the morning, as they were coming back to the city, Jesus was hungry. Seeing a fig tree far away, He went to it, but found nothing on it but leaves, and no fruits, so He said to the tree, *"Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever"* [Mt. 21:191, and immediately the fig tree withered away.

The disciples were astounded, and asked Him, "How did the fig tree dry up so fast?" And He answered, "*Verily 1 say unto you, if ye have faith and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea, it shall be done, and all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" [Mt.* 21:22].

Tuesday of Pascha

Hour	First	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Eleventh
Morning Prophesies	Ex 19:1-9 Job 23:2-17 24:1-etc Hos 4:1-8	Deut 8:11-20 Josh2:1-9 Job 27:1-20 28:1, 2 1Kings19:9-14	Ezek 21:3-13 Josh 4:23-5 Is 1:1-9	Gen 9:5-22 7,8,9:1-6 Prov 9:1-11 Is 40:9-30 Dan 7:9-15 Prov 8:1-12	Is 30:25-33 Prov 6:20-35 7:1-4
Sermon	Anba Shenouda the Archimandrite			Anba Shenouda the Archimandrite	John Chrysostom
Psalm	119:3,5	118:118,119	17:48,19	25:1,2	44:9,40:1
Gospel	John 8:21-29	Matt23:37-24:2	John 8:12-20	Matt 24:3-20	Matt 25:14-26:2
Evening Prophesies	Ezek 17:22, 22:23-29	Amos 5:18-27	Jer 13:9-14	Hos 9:14-10, 2,1	Song 8:24-30
Psalm	58:13,14	64:4,5	101:1,2	21:19,20	56:1
Gospel	Matt 22:1	Matt 24:36	Matt 25:1-13	Matt 23:29-36	John 11:55-57

Tuesday

Jesus went back to the temple. As He started to teach, the chief priests and the elders of the people asked Him "By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?"

Jesus would not answer them, as they did not answer His question about where did John's right to baptize come from? From God or from man? Then Jesus started to teach the parables of:

The two sons [Mt. 21:28-32]

The wicked vinderessers [Mt. 21:33-44]

The wedding feast [Mt. 22:2-14]

Jesus also answered the Pharisees about paying taxes by saying, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" [Mt. 22:18-21].

Jesus answered the Sadducces about the rising from death as written in Matthew 22:29-32.

When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and wanted to test Him saying, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus said, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the prophets'* [Mt. 22:37-401

Jesus sat near the temple's treasury and saw the rich men putting in a lot of money, then a poor widow threw in two little copper coins. Jesus praised her because she gave out of her need [Mark 12:43-44].

As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of His disciples said: *"Look, Master, at these stones and these buildings.'*

Jesus answered, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down" [Mark 13:2]

Then Jesus continued with the parables of:

The faithful and evil servants [Mt. 24:45-51]

The wise and foolish virgins [Mt. 25:1-13]

The talents [Mt. 25:14-30]

Jesus talked about the time when He would come in His glory to judge the nations [Mt. 25:31-46]. When

Jesus had finished teaching all these parables and sayings, He said to His disciples, *"Ye know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified'* [Mt. 26:2].

At that time, the chief priest and the elders gathered together with the high priest, and made their plans to arrest Jesus and kill Him.

Wednesday of Pascha

Hour	First	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Eleventh
Morning Prophesies	Ex 17:1-7 Prov 3:5-14 Hos 5:13-6:3	Ex 13:17-22 Josh 22:7-18 Job 27:16-20 28:1,2 Prov 4:4-etc.	Ex 14:13-15:1 Is 48:1-6 Josh 23:7-19	Gen 24:1-9 Num 20:1-13 Prov 1:10-33 Is 59:1-17 Zech 11:11-14	Is 28:16-26
Sermon	Anba Shenouda the Archimandrite			Anba Shenouda the Archimandrite	Anba Severus
Psalm	50:4,32:1	40:6,1	83:2,4	40:5,7,6	6:2, 68:14
Gospel	John 11:46-57	Luke 22:1-6	John 12:1-8	Matt 26:3-16	John 12:27-36
All the Gospel of Mark is read during this day					
Evening Prophesies	Ezek 43:5-11	Amos 4:4-13	Amos 3:1-13	Ezek 20:27-33	Jer 8:4-10
Psalm	68:1,13	54:18,1	139:1,2	7:1,2	61:4,1
Gospel	John 10:17-21	Mark 14:3-11	John 12:36-43	John 10:29-38	John 12:44-50

Wednesday

Jesus was preparing Himself for the day of the great redemption. He told His disciples that the hour is near.

Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests and made a deal with them to deliver Jesus to them. They paid him thirty silver coins, and he started to look for the opportunity to betray Jesus.

At night, Jesus went to the house of Simon the Leper. While He was eating a woman came to Him with an alabaster flask filled with very precious oil, which she poured over Jesus' head.

The disciples saw this and became angry, considering the woman's action as waste, claiming that this expensive oil could have been sold for a lot of money to be given to the poor. Jesus said to them,

> *Why trouble ye the woman? For she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For ye have the poor always with you, but Me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial.*
>
> *Verily, 1 say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her [Mt. 26:10-13].*

Holy Thursday

Hour	First	Third	Sixth	Ninth	The Lakkan	Liturgy	Eleventh
Morning Prophesies	Ex 17:8-16,15:23-etc. 16:1-3 Is58:1-9 Ezek 18:20-32	Ex 32:30-etc. 33:1-5 Josh 24:1-15 Zech 9:11-15 Prov 29:27-30:1	Jer 7:2-15 Ezek 20:39-44 Josh 12:13	Gen 22:1-19 Is 61:1-6 Gen 14:17-20 Job 27:28:13	Gen 18:1-23 Prov 9:1-11 Ex 14,15 Josh 1,2 Is4:1-4 55:1-13 56:1 Ezek 36:25 -28, 47:1-9		Is 52:13-53 19:19-25 Zech 12:11-etc.,13,1 4:1-3,6-9
Sermon	St. John Chryso-stom				Anba Shenouda The Archman-Rite		
Pauline Epistle	Eph 2:13-18				1Tim 4:9-5:10	1Cor 11:23-etc.	
Acts						1:15-20	
Psalm	54:18,20	93:13,15	30:18,13	22:1	50:7-10	22:4,5,40, 8	49:14
Gospel	Luke 22: 7-13	Matt 26: 17-19	Mark 14: 12-16	Matt 26: 17-19	John 13: 1-17	Matt 26: 20-29	John 13: 21-30
						Sermon Of St. John Chrysos-tom	
All the Gospel of Luke is read during this day							

The Evening of Holy Thursday

Hour	First	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Eleventh
Prophesies	Jer 8:17- 9:6	Ezek 36: 16-26	Ezek 22: 23-28	Jer 9:7-15 Ezek 21: 28-33	Is 27:11- 28:15
Psalm	101: 1,7	108: 1,2	58:1 68:18	27: 4,5 34: 4,5	2: 1-3
Gospel	John 13:33- 14:25 John 14:26- 15:25 John 15:26- 16:33 John 17-etc.	Matt 26: 30-35 Mark 14: 26-31 Luke 22: 31-39 John 18: 1, 2	Matt 26: 36-46 Mark 14: 32-42 Luke 22: 40-46 John 18: 3-9	Matt 26: 47-58 Mark 14: 43-54 Luke 22: 47-55 John 18: 10-14	Matt 26: Etc. Mark 14: 55-etc. Luke 22: 56-etc. John 18: 15-27

Thursday

This was the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread. The disciples asked Jesus where would He eat the Passover meal. He said to them: *"Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, 'The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples' "* [Mt. 26:18].

The disciples did as Jesus told them, and prepared for the Passover meal.

As Jesus sat down eating with His twelve disciples, He said, *"Verily, I say unto you, that one of you will betray Me"* [Mt. 26:21]. That upset His disciples, and they started to ask Him one after the other, *"Lord, is it I?*" And He answered them, saying, *"He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him, but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It had been good for that man if he had not been born"* [Mt. 26:23, 24].

Judas, the traitor, spoke up, "Master, is it I" And Jesus saith to Him "Thou hast said."

The Lord's Supper

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed, broke and gave it to the disciples, saying, "*Take, eat; this is My body. "*

Then he took the cup, He gave thanks to God and gave it to them, saying: *"Drink ye all of it, for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But 1 say unto you, 1 will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom"* [Mt. 26:26-29].

After supper, Jesus rose from the table, took off His outer garment, and tied a towel around His waist. Then He poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel. He came to Simon Peter, who said to Him, "Are you going to wash my feet, Lord?"

Jesus answered Him "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Peter said, "You shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered him, "If 1 wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me."

Peter answered: "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head."

And Jesus said to him: "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit and ye are clean, but not all." Jesus was referring to Judas who will betray Him.

After Jesus had washed their feet He returned to His place at the table and said to His disciples,

Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

Verily, verily 1 say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent is greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them [John 13:7-17].

Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them: "All *ye shall be offended because of Me this night, for it is written: I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.' But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee"* [Mt. 26:34].

Peter said, "Even if I have to die with You, 1 will not deny You," and all the other disciples said the same thing.

Jesus took His disciples to Gethsemane, and said to them to wait for Him while He went to pray. He took with Him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee. Grief and anguish came over Jesus, and He asked them to wait for Him and to keep watch with Him. He went a little farther on, kneeled with His face, down to the ground and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as 1 will, but as Thou wilt."

Then He went back to the disciples to find them asleep, and said to Peter, "What, could ye not watch with Me one

hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

He went away a second time and prayed and came back and found them again asleep. He then went back and prayed a third time, saying the same words, and came back and said to them: *"Sleep on now, and take your rest: Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. Behold he is at hand that doth betray Me"* [Mt. 26:38-46].

While Jesus was still talking, Judas arrived with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the elders. Judas agreed with the crowd that they would arrest the man he would kiss.

Judas went straight to Jesus, saying: "Greetings, master," and kissed Him.

Then they came and arrested Jesus and held Him tight. One of those who were with Jesus drew his sword and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Jesus said to him, "Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

Then He spoke to the crowd, *"Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on*

Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" [Mt. 26:55-56].

Then all the disciples left Him and ran away.

The Good Friday

Hour	Matins	Third	Sixth	Ninth	Eleventh	Twelfth
Prophesies	Deut 8:19 -9:24 Is 1:2-9 2:10-21 24:1-13 Jer 22:29- 23:6 Zech 11: 11-14 Mic 1:16-2:3 7:1-8 Songs 2: 12-22 Job 12:18 13:1	Gen 48: 1-19 Is 50:4-9 3:9-15 63:1-7 Amos 9: 5,6,8,10 Job 29:21 30:1-10	Num 21:1-9 Is 53:7-etc. Is 2:2- 13:10 Amos 8: 9-12	Jer 11:18 12:13 zech 14: 5-11 Joel 12:1-23 10,11	Ex 12:1-14 Lev 23: 5-15	Lam 3: 1-etc. Jonah 1: 10-2:7
Sermon	St. John Crysostom				Pope Athanathius The Apostolic	
	All the Psalms are read after the burial					
Pauline Epistle			Gal 6: 14-16	Phil 2: 4-11		
Gospel Matthew Mark Luke John	27:1-14 15:1-5 22:6-23:12 18:28-etc.	27:15-26 15:6-25 23:13-25 19:1-12	27:27-45 15:26-33 23:26-44 19:12-17	27:46-50 15:34-37 23:45,46 19:28-30	27:51-56 15:38-41 23:47-49 19:31-37	27:57-61 15:42-16:1 23:50-etc. 19:38-etc.

Friday

Jesus was taken to the high priest's house, where the teachers of the Law and the chief priests had gathered together. They tried to find some false evidence against Him to put Him to death. Two false witnesses came forward and said: "This man said that He can destroy the temple of God and build it again in three days."

The high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Have You no answer to these accusations? But Jesus kept quiet. Again the high priest asked Him: "In the name of the living God I now put You on oath: Tell us, are You the Messiah, the Son of God?" And Jesus answered Him: *'Thou hast' said. Nevertheless, 1 say unto you, hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven"* [Mt. 26:64].

At this the high priest tore his clothes and said: "You have just heard Hirn, what do you think?" They all answered: "He is guilty and must die." Then they spat in His face and beat Him.

Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard with the guards to see how it would all come out. A girl came and said: "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," but he denied it in front of all of them.

He went out the entrance of the courtyard where another girl said to the men. "He was with Jesus of Nazareth," but again Peter denied it, saying: "I don't know this man.'"

After a little while the men standing near there came to Him saying, "Surely you also are one of them, the way you speak gives you away." And Peter said: "I swear that I am telling the truth. May God punish me if I am not. I don't know that man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him. He went outside and cried bitterly.

When Judas, the traitor, learned that Jesus had been condemned, he repented and took back the silver coins to the chief priests and the elders, saying: "I have sinned by betraying an innocent man to death." But they didn't care about him and told him that was his business.

Judas threw the coins down in the temple, and went out and hanged himself.

The chief priests and the elders made their plans to put Jesus to death. They put Him in chains, led Him off, and handed Him over to Pilate, the Roman governor.

Pilate asked Jesus, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered him, "It is as you say." To the surprise of Pilate, Jesus refused to answer any of the accusations of the chief priests and the elders.

However, Pilate found out from the crowd that Jesus was from Galilee, so he decided to send Him to Herod. Herod could not find Jesus guilty, so he sent Him back to Pilate.

At every Passover festival, it was the habit of the Roman governor to release any one prisoner the people asked for. At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Barabbas. So Pilate asked the gathered crowd: "Which one do you want me to set free, Barabbas or Jesus?"

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to set Barabbas free, and put Jesus to death. So they started to shout, "Barabbas." When Pilate asked the crowds what to do with Jesus, since neither he nor Herod had found Him guilty, the crowd answered, "Crucify Him."

Then Pilate realized that a riot might break out, so he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and said: "I am not responsible for the death of this man! This is your doing."

The crowd answered: "Let the punishment for His death fall on us and our children!"

So Pilate freed Barabbas, and after he had Jesus whipped, he handed Him over to be crucified.

As they were leaving they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon. They forced him to carry Jesus' cross. They went to a place called Golgotha, which means the place of the skull. They crucified Jesus together with two other criminals, one on his right, and the other on His left. Above His head, they put the written sign, ""The King of the Jews."

Then Jesus said: *"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they* do" [Luke 23:34].

Then they divided His clothes among them by throwing dice. The people stood there while the Jewish leaders jeered at Him: "He saved others, let Him save Himself if He is the Messiah whom God has chosen. Let Him come down off the cross now and we will believe that He is God's Son."

Then one of the criminals on His left started to insult Him saying, "Aren't You the Messiah? Save yourself and save us!" But the other criminal on the right rebuked the one on the left, saying: "Don't you fear God? It is only right for us to be crucified, for we are receiving what we deserve for what we did, but He has done no wrong." And he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom."

Jesus answered Him "Verily, 1 say unto thee, today shalt thou be with Me in paradise" [Luke 23:43].

When the sixth hour had come, the whole country was covered with darkness, that lasted three hours. At that time, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani" [Mt. 27:46], which means, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Some of the people standing there heard Him and thought He was calling for Elijah. Then one of them took a sponge, soaked it in vinegar, and put it on a reed and gave it to Him to drink.

Jesus again gave a loud cry, and breathed His last. Then the curtain hanging in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split apart, the graves broke open, and many of God's people who had died were

raised to life. When the army officer and the soldiers with him saw what happened, they were terrified and said, "He really was the Son of God."

Pilate approved the request of the Jewish authorities to break the legs of the three men who had been crucified. So the soldiers went and broke the legs of the first man and then the second man. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that He was already dead so they did not break His legs. However, one of the soldiers plunged his spear into Jesus' side, and at once blood and water poured out [John 20:34-35].

When it was evening, a man from Arimathea, called Joseph, arrived. He was a follower of Jesus. He went to Pilate and asked his permission to take the body of Jesus. Pilate gave orders for the body to be given to Joseph.

Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a new linen sheet, with spices according to the Jewish customs, and placed it in his own new tomb, which he had just recently dug out of solid rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting, facing the tomb.

Saturday of Light

Prophet's Hymns

1. Psalm 151
2. Exodus 1 5: Moses
3. Deut 32: 1-43 Moses
4. 1 Sam. 2: 1 -11 Anna mother of Samuel
5. Habakkuk 3: 2-19
6. Jonah 2:2-10
7. Isaiah 38: 11-20
8. 2 Chron. 33: 11-20
9. Isaiah 26: 9-20 (1)
10. Isaiah 25: 1-12 (2)
11. Isaiah 26: 1-9 (3)
12. Lam. 5: 16-22 (Jeremiah)
13. Baroukh 2: 11- 16
14. 1 Kings 18: 36-39 Elijah
15. I Chron. 29: 10-13 David
16. I Kings 8: 22-30 Solomon
17. Daniel 9:4-19
18. Vision of Daniel 3: 1-23
19. Daniel 3: Azarias 20. The third Great Vision of Daniel
21. Luke 1: 46-66 Song of the Virgin
22. Luke 1: 68-79 Prayer of Zacharias the Priest
23. Luke 2: 29-32 Prayer of Simon the Elder
24. The Story of Sussanah and the Virtuous Daniel

Saturday of Delight

Hour	Matins	Third	Sixth		Ninth	Liturgy	
Prophesies	Is 25: 2-41	Jer 13: 15-22	Is 50:10 51:8	The Reve-lation is read In this period	Is 45:15-20 Jer 31:32-34		
Sermon	St. Athansius The Apostolic						
Pauline Epistle	1Cor 5:7-41					1Cor 15:1-22	
Ctholic Epistle						1Pet 1:1-9	
Acts						3:12-21	
Psalm	87:3, 43:9,22,5 1:3	Psalms of 3rd hour + 15:3,11	Psalms of 3rd hour + 39:1, 14:11		Psalms of 3rd hour + 40:9, 5	3:4,2 11:6	At the end of liturgy 67:1
Gospel	Matt 27: 62-66	Matt 16: 24-etc.	Matt 5: 3-12		John 5: 21-30	Matt 28: 1-etc.	Like 24: 1-12

Saturday

The next day, which was a Sabbath, the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate, asking him to guard the tomb of Jesus, for three days, so that the disciples couldn't go and steal the body and say that He was raised from the dead, as Jesus had previously said that He would be raised to life three days later.

Pilate sent a guard with them, and they secured the tomb by putting a seal on the stone. They left, and the guard stayed on.

Sunday

As Sunday morning was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly there was a violent earthquake, an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. His appearance was like lighting, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards were so afraid that they trembled and became like dead men.

The angel spoke to the women, saying, "Don't be afraid, I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified but He is not here. He has risen, just as He said. Go now, and tell His disciples, 'Jesus has risen from death. and now He is going to Galilee ahead of you, there you will see Him.' "

So they left the tomb in a hurry, afraid, but filled with joy, and ran to tell His disciples.

Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Rejoice." They fell and held His feet and worshipped Him.

Then Jesus said to them *"Be not afraid. Go tell My brethren that they go to Galilee, and there they will see* Me." [Mt. 28:10].

While the women went on their way, some of the soldiers guarding the tomb went back to the city and told the chief priest everything that had happened. The chief priests gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and asked them to say that the disciples came during the night and stole His body while they were asleep. The guards took the money and did what they were told to do.

The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshipped Him, even though some of them doubted.

Jesus came near them and spoke to them:

All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever 1 have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen [Mt. 28:18-20].

HOLY PENTECOST
Introduction

The Nature of the Readings

Pentecost readings have general as well as special characteristics:

1. The General characteristics. The Church has divided the readings during Pentecost for the seven weeks following the Resurrection. If the Resurrection day is added, the days would add up to fifty days, ending with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. The texts read on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during Pentecost are relatively shorter than those read on regular weekdays during the year, but they gradually become longer on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays.

2. The Special Characteristics. These can be summarized as follows:

a. Some of the Gospel texts read in the Divine Liturgy were selected as follows: 44 from St. John, 4 from St. Luke, 2 from St. Mark.
b. From the Pauline Epistles, the ones selected were: 26 from Romans, 8 from 1 Corinthians, and the rest from other Epistles.
c. From the Catholic Epistles, the following texts were selected: 39 from John's Epistles, 10 from I Peter, and one from St. Jude.

d. From Acts, the texts chosen talk about the Apostles' evangelical mission.

The Topics Covered by the Readings

The general and basic rules are the same as all other days of the year (see weekdays introduction).

Since Pentecost is divided into seven weeks, preceded by Resurrection day, and since it starts on a Monday, the general topics of the text readings for every week conform to Sundays' Gospel and is complemented by the topic touched on the Saturday ending the week.

The topic touched on during the five-week days is a ramification of the main topic. In this manner, the message is gradually and logically disclosed from Monday through Friday. The basic message for the week is touched in Saturday's texts, thus complementing Sunday's topic[1]

The Purpose

The purpose of the Church during the Holy Pentecost is to help us live and experience the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection is not a story, but a life in which the Christian strongly feels his resurrection from sin, daily weaknesses,

1 Banoub Abdou, Kenoz El-ne'ma, Vol. 6 (Cairo, Egypt: The Sheraty Bookstore. 1965). pp. 2-9.

anger, hatred, glory of personal honor, and worldly lusts [1]. Then we can say that we rose with Christ.

The Church has prepared a practical method that takes us from one week to the other, the experience of the seven weeks of Pentecost are arranged according to the Sunday readings, so that they all revolve around the Person of Jesus Christ. Thus, we are strengthened in Him and our resurrection is complete.

First Sunday: The Lord Jesus is our Faith and our Recovery from doubt (John 20:19-31]

Second Sunday: The Lord Jesus is the Bread of our life [John 6:35-45]

Third Sunday: The Lord Jesus is the Water of our life [John 4: 1-42]

Fourth Sunday: The Lord Jesus is the Light of our life [John 12:35-50]

Fifth Sunday: The Lord Jesus is our Way of life [John 14:1-11]

Sixth Sunday: The Lord Jesus is the Conqueror of the world [John 16:23-33]

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1. Bishoy Kamel, The Church During the Holy Pentecost (Alexandria, Egypt: St. George Coptic 0rthodox Church, 1974).

Seventh Sunday: The Lord Jesus is the Sender of the Holy Spirit [John 15:26-16:15].

The Resurrection has destroyed doubt and the lack of faith, and hence the Church was formed. In this place of sojourn, the Body of Christ (I am the bread of Life) is the true nutrition of the Church, and any other food would do her more harm than good. The Lord Jesus alone is the water that quenches her thirst (I am the living water), because the worldly water increases her thirst and does not quench it.

Thus the Church should proceed in the light of Christ (I am the light of the world), confident that the Lord Jesus is the way to life (I am the way), and that Jesus, by whom the Church lives, has conquered the world (I have conquered the world), and that He ascended unto heaven to send us His Holy Spirit, and seat us with Him in the heavens.

In the Old Testament, by the same strong heavenly arrangement, the people of Israel experienced the crossing over and life with God until He led them to Canaan. These people before the crossing, were subject to the sins of fear, suspicion, and the attachment to the flesh pots as a source of nutrition for them and the dependence on the water of the river as the only source for quenching their thirst. But the crossing of the Red Sea drew the line between the worldly life and the new life by the power of God--the crossing of the sea is a symbol of baptism, and baptism is our share in the Resurrection of Christ.

Selections Read during the Holy Pentecost

First Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm	95:9	92:4,5	29:5,6,7	96:8,9	11:6,7	118:5,6,7	32:3,2
Gospel	John 20: 19-23	John 6: 15-22	Matt 9: 15-17	Mark 2: 3-13	Luke 4: 38-42	John 6: 54-58	Luke 5: 1-11
Matins							
Psalm	96:12	104:1	104:25,26	105:3,4	105:31	76:1,2	95:1
Gospel	Luke 24	Matt 28	John 1:	Luke 9:	Luke 20:	John 20:	John 21:
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	1 Thes 4: 13-5;11	Rom 6: etc.	1 Cor. 15: 50-58	Eph. 1: 15-2:3	Heb 13: 10-21	Col. 1: 21-23	Eph. 4: 20-32
Catholic Epistle	1 Pet.2: 11-etc.	1 Pet.4: 1-11	1 Pet.1: 10-21	1 Pet.3: 8-15	1 Pet.1: 15-2:10	1 John 1: 1-7	1 John 2: 7-17
Acts	3:1-20	10:24-43	4:1-13	4:13-22	13:34-42	4:19-31	17:16-etc.
Psalm	103:23,29, 30	104:1,2,3	105:1	105:32	106:1,2	118:52	97:1,5

1. All the Pentecost Reading Tables taken from:

St. Mina Monastery . Natiga Doweria Tabkan lel Takweem El Kopty waal Miladi (Alexandria. Egypt), pp. 22.23.

First Week of Pentecost

The teachings of the Church in the first week deal with the power of faith in the resurrection of the body. Faith is necessary for walking in the wilderness, for encountering Amalek, and for trust in the power of God to sustain the people by providing them with food and drink. Faith is necessary for the cure from the bites of snakes (by gazing upon the brass serpent-symbol of the Cross). Finally, the power of faith is an absolute necessity for entering Canaan.

And thus, the Lord Jesus strengthened His disciples' faith (in the first week) by entering the room while the doors were closed to teach them that the Resurrection is the ability to come out of a closed grave--the creation of life from death, success from failure, and faith after despair. It is the emerging of purity out of the human weakness. It is absolute faith. It is life itself to us Christians.

By the end of the week, He dispelled Thomas' doubt by allowing him to touch His life-giving wounds. Thus, my brethren, in the first week we should fix our eyes on the Risen Lord and His wounds, trusting and believing that he will raise us, will do the impossible with us. It is the week of Faith.

Second Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm	26:16,17	9:15	40:2	89:11	15:9	41:8,9	110:1
Gospel	Matt 14:23-33	Matt 17:19-23	Matt 9:36-38	Matt 11:11-14	Matt 17:14-18	Luke 18:35-43	John 6:16-23
Matins							
Psalm	111: 3,4,5	7:6,9	62:1,2	5:3,4	15:10,11	110:1	110:2,3
Gospel	Matt 8:23-27	Matt 9:27-31	Matt 9:32-35	Matt 11:2-6	Matt 16:21-23	John 5:37-46	John 6:24-33
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom 1:1-4	Rom 1:7-17	Rom 1:11-14	Rom 1:16-17	Rom 1:19-22	2Tim 2:8-15	Eph 2:19 3:9
Catholic Epistle	1John 1:1-6	1John 1:6-12	1John 2:1-6	1John 2:7-10	1John 2:11-14	1John 2:21-25	1John 5:10-20
Acts	4:1-4	4:5-13	4:8-12	4:13-18	4:19-21	9:31-35	20:1-20
Psalm	69:5	7:7,8	9:1	8:3,4	9:6,7	106:15,16	110:8,9
Gospel	John 3: 31-36	John 5: 22-24	John 5: 31-37	John 5: 39-47	John 6: 54-58	John 6: 1-14	John 6: 35-45

Second Week of Pentecost

The people were in need of food in that desert, so God sent them the manna from heaven, and here the Gospel of the second Sunday reaffirms that he who eats the Lord has life and that there is no life for man without His Body. The manna was enough to sustain the people, but was not a guarantee for everlasting life (Your fathers ate manna in the desert and died). In the Christian resurrection there is never death but as Christ is living by the Father, so do we when we eat His Body and live by Him forever. What is the use of speaking about the Resurrection if the resurrected person has to die later? Resurrection means conquering death--it means everlasting life and our nourishment in the Resurrection is the ever-living Body of Christ.

Brethren, this week is the week of confirmation in the resurrected Christ. Eat His Body and be firm in the strength of His Resurrection. Be firm in life and live in Him.

Moreover, all worldly food will leave us nothing but death. So what is the use of racing after the poisonous foods of this world? What is the use of racing after the passing glories, positions and lusts of this world?

Third Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm	95:4,5	56:6	4:19-21	100:1,3	45:7,8	31:9	114:1
Gospel	Matt 18:1-5	Matt 18:6,7	Matt 20:29-33	Matt 13:53-58	Matt 11:20-24	Matt 15:29-31	John 8:12-20
Matins							
Psalm	18:1,2	56:1,5	57:8,9	100:10	145:1-4	106:1,2	14:3,4
Gospel	Matt 17:10-13	Matt 17:20-22	Matt 20:17-19	Matt 22:34-40	Matt 22:41-46	John 7:10-13	John 8:21-30
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom 2:4-7	Rom 2:8-13	Rom 2:14-16	Rom 2:17-20	Rom 2:25-29	Gal 3:5-11	Col 3:1-17
Catholic Epistle	1John 2:15,16	1John 2:18-23	1John 2:21-25	1John 2:26-3:1	1John 3:2-3	1John 3:2-11	1John 3:13-24
Acts	4:23-27	4:27-31	4:32-35	5:1-6	5:5-11	5:12-20	5:37-43
Psalm	7:1-19	7:12,13	17:46-49	32:17,18	85:11,9	19:7	113:17
Gospel	John 7:39-42	John 8:12-16	John 8:23-26	John 8:28-30	John 8:31-39	John 5:47-65	John 4:1-42

Third Week of Pentecost

One of the necessities for the people in the wilderness was water, without which they would die of thirst. This is why God sent them water out of the rock. We wonder how a Christian can live in this world without the water of the Holy Spirit. The human being has emotions and feelings and needs that have to be filled, and unless he reaches the state of fullness by the Holy Spirit, he will eventually thirst after the world and its water, of which whosoever drinketh shall thirst again.

This is the subject of the Gospel of the third week, about the Samaritan Woman. Our Lord Jesus revealed the nature of His Holy Spirit by saying that He is rivers of living waters flowing with eternal life--thus His nature is life itself, action, reviving and inundating others (with life).

It is necessary for the Christian during this week to experience being filled by the Holy Spirit through prayer, and meditation on the Scripture, and relinquishing this world, so he can feel an inner spiritual motion THAT would fill all his needs, whether emotional, psychological, or spiritual. The Church calls, *'The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will. let him take the water of life freely"* [Rev. 22:17]

Thus in the Resurrection we should feel this inner motion of the Holy Spirit in our lives so we can overflow and touch

others. Any person who speaks about the Resurrection without feeling the flow of the living water within him is a person who lives death itself unawares. Every Christian in the Church has rivers of living water flowing from within him. But where are they? Man always desires to draw from the outside and in ignorance thinks he does not own rivers within him. The saints have discovered those springs. Let us go within to those springs of life to taste the strength of the Resurrection and drink from its overflowing Spirit, to taste from the springs of love that gush from the Lord's side on the cross, so we never would thirst again for the water of this world.

Fourth Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm	42:5-6	66:1	118:35	126:3	69:1,2	128:1,2	117:1,2
Gospel	Mark 16:17-20	Mark 4:35-41	Mark 6:47-52	Mark 7:1-4	Mark 8:10-15	Luke 11:17-23	John 6:57-59
Matins							
Psalm	42:3	66:4,5	118:23,24	96:8	69:1,5	145:9	117:27,28
Gospel	Mark 4:30-34	Mark 1:10-44	Mark 3:31-34	Mark 4:21-25	Mark 4:26-29	John 7:31-36	John 8:51-59
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom 4:4-8	Rom 3:19-21	Eph 2:13-18	Rom 3:21-26	Rom 3:27-31	Eph 1:1-14	2Thess 2:13-3:5
Catholic Epistle	1John 3:8-13	1John 3:13-17	1Pet 4:8-13	1John 3:18-24	1John 4:1-6	1John 4:15-5:1	1John 4:7-13
Acts	5:21-22	5:27-29	20:1-6	5:30-33	5:34-46	9:36-43	13:8-23
Psalm	118:81,105	53:1,2	73:11,12,18,19	66:1,5	43:1,2	14:5	117:13-16
Gospel	John 8:39-42	John 8:51-55	John 7:14-29	John 8:54-59	John 10:34-38	John 7:14-24	John 12:35-50

Fourth Week of Pentecost

The fourth very important matter for the people in the desert is a pillar of fire to light their way through the darkness of the desert. This is the subject of the Gospel of the fourth Sunday where Jesus says: "Walk while ye have the light ... I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in Me should not abide in darkness."

The Resurrection is a procession in the light because he who walks in the dark stumbles, falls and dies. We should live this week in the blessings of the light, the light of the gospel, the light of the Holy Spirit, the light of the Church and its teachings. Let us beware of getting carried away by the dark currents of thought of this world, its lusts and cares after all worldly needs. Let us beware of the darkness of untruthfulness, hypocrisy, flattery, evasion contempt, and hatred. Let us walk in the light of the love of God, and in simplicity. This is the true experience of the Resurrection during this week.

Fifth Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm	42:5,6	117:1,2	18:2,4	17:47,48	117:7,8	134:18	134:5,19
Gospel	Mark 5:21-43	John 3:31-36	Mark 12:35-40	John 6:7-7:1	Luke 14:7-11	Luke 14:1-6	John 14:21-25
Matins							
Psalm	117:16,17	117:18,19	117:23,24	117:25	117:27,28	35:4,5	134:18
Gospel	Mark 4:30-34	Mark 4:35-41	Mark 12:28-34	Mark 7:5-8	Luke 14:12-15	John 7:37-45	John 15:4-8
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom 4:4-9	Rom 4:9-12	Rom 5:20-6:41	Rom 6:5-11	Rom 6:17-22	Heb 10:1-13	Heb 10:19-38
Catholic Epistle	1John 3:21-24	1John 4:11-17	1John 4:15-19	1John 4:18-5:1	1John 5:1-6	1John 5:11-21	1Prt 4:6-14
Acts	7:37-41	7:40-42	7:44-50	7:51-54	8:1-4	23:6-11	9:1-20
Psalm	69:5	33:4,7	117:7,8	38:13	118:112,113	134:3,5	135:1,2
Gospel	John 3:25-30	John 12:44-48	John 13:16-20	John 17:18-21	John 17:22-26	John 14:1-11	John 14:1-11

Fifth Week of Pentecost

The last four pillars (Faith, Manna. Water from the rock, and the Pillars of fire are enough to prepare for us a clear road leading to Canaan. This is the Gospel of the fifth week where the Lord Jesus said: 'I *am the way. "* When He says: "I am the way," it does not means that He has come to draw for us a map of the road, or be a guide on the road, but He said: "I am the way," and to clarify this, we refer to the Apostle's words, *"For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" [Eph.* 5:30], and according to the extent the members are attached in Him, so is the extent of the security of our path.

The fifth Sunday is the Sunday before Ascension Thursday, and because of that the Church explains to us how to be lifted up to heaven. Christ is the Head of the Church and He ascended into heaven and we are permanent members in His body, and hence we say: *"As for us, we dwell in heavenly places." Since the head ascended to heaven and sat on the right hand of the Father, and as the body and limbs are attached to Him, the Church can rightfully say while estranged in the wilderness, "He raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places"* [Eph. 2:6].

In short, we do not look for a way because Jesus is our way. May we dwell in Him and may our thoughts be centered around Him Who has raised us to heaven and prepared for us a place at the right hand of the Father. So

may we experience heaven with Him while still here on earth. Amen.

Sixth Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm	46:1	46:4,5	22:4-6	67:30,31,32	98:1,2	50:10	145:1,9
Gospel	Mark6: 30-34	Mark9 14-29	Mark9: 33-37	2Luke9: 51-62	Mark8: 34-9:1	Luke11: 53-12:3	Mark12: 28-37
Matins							
Psalm	46:6,7	46:3,4	22:1,2	67:18,19	109:1,2	111:3,4	146:1
Gospel	Mark 8:22-26	Mark 9:30-32	Mark 9:38-42	Mark16:12-20	Mark9:2-7	Luke10:21-24	John14:8-14
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom.8: 2-4	Rom.8: 9-11	Rom.7: 1-7	1Tim.3: 13-17	1Cor.11: 2-16	Eph.4: 8-16	1Cor.15: 57-16:8
Catholic Epistle	1John5: 9-12	1John5: 9-12	1John5: 13-18	1Pet3: 15-22	1John5: 14-21	1Pet.5: 5-12	1Pet.1: 2-12
Acts	9:23-31	5:27-29	19:6-10	1:1-14	22:6-10	24:10-21	20:1-16
Psalm	37:1,9	114:10	39:12,17	23:9,10	68:25, 26,27	135:1,2	147:1,5
Gospel	John16: 15-23	John16: 23-33	John17: 1-9	Luke24 36-53	John14: 26-31	John16: 15-23	John16: 23-33

Sixth Week of Pentecost

The people passing through the desert road should seek the victorious God to fight Amalek, and should beware of the desire for the flesh pots, onions, leeks, and the golden calf. Moses has conquered Amalek by raising his hands in the form of a cross, and Moses defeated the peoples' lusts by looking forward to the land Of Canaan. 'Me theme in church this Sunday is, "I have overcome the world; in the world ye shall have tribulation." When the strong, faithful Christian are sure that he has already conquered the world, they are strengthened in their efforts and by the sign of the cross. They defeat Amalek, and by meditation on divine and heavenly matters, they will stay away from the lusts of this world. By dwelling in Christ, they say: "I am not alone, because the Father is with me.'

We are now dealing with a defeated Satan and a conquered world and a sin condemned in the flesh. We do not seek an outside victory because the victory is within us in Christ.

He conquered for us and by Him we have inner victory. He called us in the Gospel of this Sunday, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name; ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." Life in the power of the Resurrection knows nothing except victory, joy and renunciation of the world.

Seventh Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Vespers							
Psalm	21:2	47:1	18:1,10	131:3	41:3	106:2,3	5:12,14
Gospel	Luke4: 38-41	Mark9: 14-29	Luke7: 18-23	Luke8: 22-25	Luke11: 24-26	Luke8: 40-56	John7: 37-44
Matins							
Psalm	118:127, 128	137:1	11:8	90:10,11	118:72, 67	32:5,6	103:28
Gospel	Luke4: 42-5:3	Luke6: 12-16	Luke7: 34-38	Luke8: 1-3	Luke8: 18-21	John17: 1-13	John14: 26:15:4
Liturgy							
Pauline Epistle	Rom.8: 12-17	Rom.8: 22-37	Rom.8: 28-39	1Cor.14: 5-11	1Cor.14: 12-17	1Cor.13: 1-14:4	1Cor.12: 1-31
Catholic Epistle	2John: 1-8	2John: 8-13	3John: 1-8	3John: 10-15	Jude: 21-25	1John2: 12-17	1John2: 20-3:1
Acts	14:19-23	14:20-22	15:4-9	15:7-12	15:13-18	1:15-26	1:15-26
Psalm	81:5,6	12:6	88:30,29	30:16	24:1	107:2.3	46:5,6
Gospel	John15: 1-8	John15: 9-15	John15: 12-16	John15: 17-25	John7: 37-39	John17: 14-26	26-16:15

Seventh Week of Pentecost

We find no equivalent for this week in the wilderness of the Old Testament. It is the Father's gift sent to us through His Beloved Son--it is His Spirit. With what longing and fervor of heart does the Church live this week in memory of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Who came down in the form of tongues of fire. The Christian without the Holy Spirit lives as an orphan: "I will not leave you comfortless."

This week's message deals with the filling by the Holy Spirit. This starts first by repentance. *'And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto Me day of redemption'* [Eph. 4:30-5:3]. The second step for being filled by the Holy Spirit consists in prayer, thanksgiving, praise, and obedience with submission [Eph. 5: 18-21].

This Sunday ends the Holy Pentecost. Thus the Church has gradually led us from the Resurrection, to the confirmation, to the journey on the road, and finally to being filled by the Holy Spirit when our lives will overflow with living waters gushing from within the Church and upon the Church.

After this starts the Fast of the Holy Apostles. This fast is offered by us to the Church for the sake of the spreading of the Gospel and the Kingdom of God. The souls who have achieved fulfilment offer their humble prayers and fasting as a sacrifice of love for the sake of the Church which Christ bought by His Blood, for the sake of the preaching and spreading of the Gospel, for the sake of the unity of heart for love and for all the Church. Amen.

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